A Personal History: World War II

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1983
Corporal - Armament
726th Squadron
451st Bombardment Group (H)
U.S. 15th Air Force

Compiled by Hugh C. Nicolay
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CREDITS

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FORWARD

Karl's story, published herein, from an unaltered scanned digital copy of the manuscript found in his den in his house in Cocoa Beach in 2017. Karl had relocated to a long-term care facility and died later that year. Karl created the document in 1983 from a daily journal that started as a teenager and continued throughout his military service. The fate of his original journal is unknown.

Karl was a member of the 451 Bombardment Group veterans group. He shared some of his story in their meetings and publications.

A brief biography and photographs has been added.

An extensive digital collection of papers and photographs pertaining to Karl and his wife Betty have been compiled and uploaded to Archive.org, search title = "Eichhorn Archive"

A 28 minute audio interview with Karl in 2017 has been uploaded to YouTube; link is tinyURL.com/KFEaudio.

A PDF copy of this book has been uploaded to Archive.org; link is tinyURL.com/KFEstory.

This book can be obtained from the amazon.com bookstore at cost, $6.86.

Hugh C. Nicolay, Compiler
West Melbourne, Florida
2025

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PROLOGUE

Since my days in high school, I have been an avid and fascinated student of history, particularly the history of those great military conflicts which have influenced the destiny of peoples and nations. Over the past three decades my interest has centered primarily on the Civil War and World War II. Though I have not neglected the first World War, I have never found it of any real interest for in-depth study. It was a senseless and unnecessary conflict, incited by narrow-minded political leaders and conducted by some of the most incompetent commanders ever assembled on one field of battle. World War I was Petersburg; World War II was Chancellorsville. Though, over the years, I have pored through hundreds of books on a wide range of historical subjects, two specific books still come to mind as close friends during my service in World War II, for I carried a hard-cover copy of each in my duffel bag when I was shipped overseas, and read each several times. They were Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World" and Wells' "The Outline of History".

I have often wondered what period of history I might have selected, had I been offered the option to select my own birthdate. That would be a difficult choice, indeed. To stand with the Athenians on the plain at Marathon - to sail with Drake - to have been a longbowman at Agincourt - to join a wagon-train to the West - to have experienced the North American wilderness before the white man shattered the climax forests and decimated the native peoples and wildlife - to have walked with Jackson up the Brock Road. Ah, what choices one would have! And yet, in my own lifetime of nearly three score years there have probably been more significant social, economic, and techno-logical changes than in any other like period of history. And of these World War II was the most profound and memorable event of my life - an experience which pervades my thoughts still, after forty years.

In my studies of the Civil War and World War II I have come to realize the great importance to students and historians of the diaries and letters of the common soldiers who experienced those cataclysmic events. It is my primary purpose here to put down my own experiences as a soldier in the U.S. 15th Air Force, along with a short history of my earlier years, for continuity. It is not a story of derring-do. It was not my lot to engage a Zero or ME 109 in aerial combat - to splash ashore at Omaha Beach - to parachute behind enemy lines on an OSS errand or to command a tank in the Western Desert. Though I carried arms in a combat area, I did not directly engage in combat. Yet, of course, there were millions like me, common soldiers and sea-men who did their duty in whatever capacity they were assigned and wherever they were sent. I would guess that the vast majority of servicemen who saw service during the War never had occasion to fire a weapon in anger, but each man's contribution, however small, was part of the whole. This is the story of one man's War, as recorded in his day-by-day journal. It is my hope that it will prove interesting, even helpful perhaps, to some future historian or other interested reader.

THE EARLY YEARS

It must have been a difficult decision for my Mother. At the age of 26 she was a Principal of three elementary school buildings in Bedford, Ohio. But as she told me many years later, she had fallen in love with my Father's dark, curly hair. At 31 he had worked his way through the College of Agriculture at Ohio State University and was then employed as the manager of the poultry branch of Circle W Farms in Gates Mills, Ohio. The estate was owned by Mrs. Walter White, widow of the founder of the White Motor Car Co. My parents were married in August of 1923 and I was their first-born on 4 June of the following year. To complete our family, my sister, Barbara, drew her first breath in October of 1927.

Soon after, my Father left his job at the White estate and moved the family to Barnesville, in southeastern Ohio, where he had purchased the old family farm from his parents. There he built, largely with his own hands, a hatchery and started his own business, doing custom hatching for local farmers and selling poultry and eggs. It was a hard life of generally heavy manual work with little monetary return. But in those days a family could just get by on a small farm by living frugally, bartering with neighbors and "making do". I entered the public school in Barnesville in 1930. Two years later, as the Great Depression closed about us, and farm incomes fell precipitously, Mrs. White contacted Father and asked him to return to manage her poultry operation once again. It was an opportunity which could not be ignored and we moved back to Gates Mills where Barbara and I entered the school at Chesterland.

Though it is difficult to dredge up memories of very early years, I remember 1932 well, especially the first election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the conflict of opinion during the campaign. I can still remember sitting around our small Crosley table radio to listen to his speeches. It was a time of great changes and hopes for the future.

The first radio I remember from the late twenties was powered by a lead-acid car battery and had three large tuning knobs on the front, and no dial. Tuning was largely a matter of chance, as one had to rotate all three knobs back and forth until a station came through on the headphones. Once you identified the station's call letters you wrote down the settings of the three knobs so that it could be tuned more readily the next time. The cars I remember from those days were mostly Ford Model T's, though the first car we owned was an Overland of uncertain vintage. Father bought a new Chevrolet in 1927 which he drove for the next ten years - it had spoked wheels and was framed with wood.

In the early thirties life tended to be a little primitive in the rural areas - outhouses were common and many homes still used kerosene lamps and coal stoves. We were always fortunate to have indoor plumbing and electricity, but our kitchen stove used kerosene and the furnace burned coal. During the winter, when the furnace was operating, we always had lots of hot water, since there were heating

coils connected into the furnace. Otherwise water had to be heated on the kitchen stove for washing dishes and similar tasks, or by firing up a separate coal-burning cast iron stove which heated an auxiliary water coil. Father generally ran that stove only once a week - to heat water for the Saturday-night baths.

Until the mid-thirties, when we bought our first refrigerator, we used an ice-box in the kitchen. Ice was delivered daily, as was bread and milk, the latter in glass quart bottles. We had cardboard signs to place in the living room window to advise deliverymen of our needs. The ice sign was a square, with numbers in each corner, and was oriented in the window to tell whether we needed 25, 50, 75 or 100 pounds of ice. In winter the non-homogenized milk often started to freeze before we brought it inside, and Mother would often treat me with a couple spoonfuls of frozen cream. For years bread was delivered unsliced and I can still recall my mother's squeal of surprise and joy when she opened her first loaf of pre-sliced bread. Most of the time staple groceries were ordered by phone. The grocer would jot down the list, assemble the items and deliver them to our door a couple hours later - no delivery charge, of course. Whatever meat we had, other than chicken, was purchased at a meat market, usually on Saturday.

The depression was a very difficult period for many people. We were somewhat better off than most, as Father was employed at Circle W Farms for most of the period. As I recall, he was paid about $ 75.00 a month, and our cottage and utilities were provided at no cost. Entertainment was pretty much limited to movies, radio, regular Sunday-afternoon drives and occasional picnics. Father loved to fish and we would often go to a local stream to fish for bullheads, when he could spare the time. If there was a little money left at the end of the month Mother would take us to a matinee movie at one of the grand theaters in downtown Cleveland. Even if the movie wasn't memorable, those theaters, with plush carpets and wall hangings, uniformed ushers, deep, comfortable seats and beautiful illumination, were a treat still fondly remembered after all these years. Those were the great days before popcorn and rude, noisy patrons. My Uncle Bill - Mother's older brother - was a professional baseball player in his younger days and sometimes took me to see the Cleveland Indians play at the old League Park. I still remember seeing Babe Ruth play one of his last games during an All Star game in the early thirties. We saw many of the old-time greats, such as Lefty Gomez, Lefty Grove, Lou Gehrig, and Dizzy & Daffy Dean.

Overall, my memories of growing up in the thirties are generally pleasant, in spite of the depression. While we had very little money, we always had a place to live and adequate food on the table. We had friends who weren't so fortunate, and I can remember Mother taking soup or stew to the home of close friends, on the pretext of a social visit, because she knew they really were hungry much of the time. It was a period when people helped friends and neighbors, when no one locked the front door when they left home and when city streets were safe, even at night.

I suppose my most painful memory goes back to the winter of '32. I was somewhat frail as a boy and had more than my share of ear and throat infections. That winter I developed a severe inner ear infection in my right ear. Since there were no anti-biotics, the only treatment our doctor could offer was to lance my eardrum periodically to encourage drainage. After all these years I still cringe a bit to think about the pain. Nothing seemed to help and after I developed a high, constant fever a specialist was consulted. My parents were shocked to learn that without an immediate mastoid operation I could not be expected to live more than another week or so. I was sent to a hospital in Cleveland where an ENT surgeon, Dr. Pitkin, operated the next day. The operation was successful and clearly I owe my life to that surgeon. My recovery was slow and often painful, especially when dressings and drainage tubes were changed. Overall, I missed about four months of school, and though I was a good student, the school Principal felt it best that I repeat the third grade. This put me a year behind in school and was to have a significant effect later on.

By the mid-thirties I had developed what has become a lifelong interest in aviation and aircraft. I experienced the joy of attending the Cleveland Air Races several times and one of my fondest memories is of Jimmie Doolittle winning the Thompson Trophy in the magnificent, but deadly Gee-Bee R-1 in the fall of '32. My heros were the great race and barnstorming pilots of those years - Doolittle, Roscoe Turner, Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart, Bennie Howard, and many others. I truly feel sorry for boys growing up today. There are no more heros, only rock bums and junkies. I constructed many beautiful scale and flying model planes from elaborate balsa and bamboo paper kits - there was no plastic junk to simply fit together then. Model building taught patience, skill and real craftsmanship.

By 1937 our old Chevrolet was becoming a bit creaky and Mother quietly initiated a "We really need a new car" campaign. One day on the way back from a shopping trip to South Euclid she stopped at the Chevvy dealership to pick up some advertising folders. The new model Chevrolet was now available in colors other than basic black. One could also order a car in either Desert Tan or Gunmetal Gray. I recall that the advertising brochure showed a new Chevvy parked on a dock with a Navy battleship moored impressively in the background - both, of course, painted "Battleship Gray". Wow! That was for me! Though only thirteen, my father had already taught me to drive the '27 Chevvy and I drove it regularly around the farm on errands by myself. Since we had just bought our first refrigerator and a new GE radio the previous year, Father was not at all enthusiastic about taking on payments for a new car just then. I don't know whether Mother arranged it or just how it transpired, but one Saturday a salesman from the agency drove into our yard with a new demonstrator Chevvy. It was truly a buyer's market then and his offer was to let us use the car for one whole week at no charge and under no obligation. It was too good an offer to turn down, but Father lost the battle as soon as he allowed the salesman to leave the car. After a week of enjoying the ride and new smell of that demonstrator, Father was on the losing side of a three-to-one vote. Shortly thereafter the dealer delivered to our house a new Gunmetal Gray Standard 1937 Chevrolet. It was our pride and joy and served our family faithfully for the next fifteen years -

good value for the cost, which was on the order of five or six hundred dollars, as I recall.

The G.E. radio, mentioned above, also resides in a firm niche in my memory. It was on sale at the May Company in Cleveland and since our old Crosley was in a state of constant intermittency, Mother could not resist buying the new radio, even though she had not discussed it with Father. That fact caused some dissent when it was delivered to our home one day, but again Father had lost the skirmish. The G.E. was a glorious console model with five tuning bands, including, to my delight, most of the international short wave frequencies. Father and I spent many hours on Friday and Saturday nights tuning in London, Paris, Berlin and other exotic stations.

How could anyone who experienced it forget the "Golden Age" of radio in the thirties? I often ate my supper from a tray by the radio so that I would not miss "Jimmie Allen", an aviation adventure series broadcast from Cleveland. Then there were the early "soaps" such as Ma Perkins, Just Plain Bill and David Harum, followed in the evening by programs like First Nighter, The Green Hornet, The Shadow, and Suspense. One can never forget the great comedy shows - Jack Benny, Amos 'n Andy, Lum 'n Abner, Charlie McCarthy, Burns and Allen and my favorite, Fred Allen. Sometimes I think television has yet to equal radio at its best. By the late thirties, as events in Europe became increasingly grim, I took greater and greater interest in international affairs. Father and I seldom missed the evening news broadcasts by Lowell Thomas, Boake Carter, Walter Winchell and our hands-down favorite, H.V. Kaltenborn.

During the winter of '37/38 Dad came down with a strep throat and badly infected tonsils. A Doctor who treated him lanced his tonsils but cut too deeply on one without realizing it. Father apparently bled all night and by the next morning he was almost unconscious from the infection and loss of blood. An ambulance was called to take him to a hospital in Cleveland. I can still see his almost white face as they wheeled the stretcher out of the house. He reached to pat my head but there was no strength in his hand as I held it in mine on the way to the ambulance. As they left I could not but feel that I might never see my Father again. He was placed under the care of the same surgeon, Dr. Pitkin, who had operated on me five years previously. Somehow, with transfusions and emergency care Father pulled through and returned home to recuperate. Then another blow struck our family.

One day while Father was still recovering, Mrs. White's business manager, a Mrs. Reilly, came to see him to tell him that they had decided to close down the Circle W poultry operation to save overhead and that they were giving him thirty days notice of lay-off. To this day I am not sure of all the circumstances which brought this about. Dad had never really liked working for someone else. He always wanted to be back on the family farm, working for himself, in spite of our generally good circumstances at Circle W Farm. Mother was in strong disagreement with his viewpoint and the worst arguments I can recall them having were on this very important issue. In addition, Father, and indeed most of the other workers on the estate, disliked Mrs. Reilly intensely. He called her Mrs. White's

"hatchet-woman". I suspect there may have been words between them from time to time, as Father could be pretty outspoken when he was angry. And so, I have always felt that there may have been something more personal than simply overhead involved in Father's loss of work.

It was a serious matter for us - Father was still not fully recovered, we had no money saved up and were still paying for the new car. I have never known all the details, as we kids were sheltered from the financial problems. I am sure Mother's older sister, Esther, who was a public health nurse in Cleveland, and my favorite Aunt, probably helped with the immediate expenses. There was really no place for us to go. When we had left the farm near Barnesville, Dad had let his Sister and Brother-in-Law move into the house and operate the hatchery. It would take some time for them to find another home and work and in the meantime we had to vacate our cottage on the estate. At that time my Mother's eldest sister, Nina, offered to share her rented house in DeLand, Florida with us. She was a widow living there with her son and daughter who were students at Stetson University. They were well off financially, as the result of selling off large land holdings near Cleveland after Aunt Nina's husband had died many years previously. However, they had a relatively small rented house and it was no small thing to share it with a family of four and pay most of the bills for nearly eight months.

Thus, as soon as we could make all the arrangements, our furniture, including the precious new refrigerator and radio, was placed in storage in South Euclid, the Chevvy was loaded with all we could take in the line of clothing and personal items, and we headed south in early 1938. I believe it took four or five days to drive to DeLand. In those days travelers stayed either at tourist homes or in tourist cottages. A night in a tourist home cost about $ 2.50 or $ 3.00, while the cottages cost $ 4.00 or $ 5.00 a night. Though economy was a primary consideration, under the circumstances, Father elected to stay at the tourist cottages simply because we all enjoyed them much more. Also, by cooking breakfast and supper in the cottage, we saved the cost of restaurant meals. The weather was cold most of the way and the cottages were heated either by gas or by wood-burning, pot-bellied stoves. One of these almost caused our undoing in a cottage in Georgia. Outside was a nice pile of pre-cut firewood along with a pile of split Georgia "fat wood", intended to be used as kindling. Father, having never seen it before, filled the stove with the fat wood and lit it. The cottage began to heat up nicely to relieve the chill air. But the heat increased and increased and soon, to our dismay, the smoke pipe and entire stove began to glow. The whole thing got cherry-red, in spite of closing the draft. Mother frantically moved our suitcases and the furniture away from the runaway stove. Windows and doors were opened to let in cold air and a desperate attempt to cool off the stove with a cup of water only resulted in an explosive burst of steam. Dad rushed Barb and me outside and was about to look for a fire extinguisher when it appeared that the smoke pipe was losing some of its awesome glow. Finally, the stove cooled off without any serious damage, but the experience became a family legend.

On the way south Father drove down part of the newly opened Blue Ridge Parkway, which at that time was not paved. The views were spectacular

but Mother was in a constant state of fear because of the steep drop-offs and the almost total lack of any sort of guard rails. All in all, it was an enjoyable trip which still brings back fond memories. It was a new experience for Mother and Dad as we had never been able to travel much. Neither had ever been to Florida, though Barbara and I had each made a trip there by train in prior summers with Esther, on two-week vacation trips to visit Aunt Nina and our cousins when they lived at Sarasota.

After we arrived at my Aunt's home in DeLand and got settled in, Barb and I were entered in the DeLand school to finish out the year - she the sixth grade and I the seventh. I still remember those DeLand kids as the most friendly and considerate of any school I ever attended. They accepted this strange Yankee kid without reservation and I soon found myself pitching on the class soft-ball team. During the first half of the school year at Chesterland, I had been placed on a special accelerated program so that I would be able to skip the eighth year and enter high school in the fall of '38 , to make up the year lost by illness. Unfortunately, this move to DeLand ruined those plans, as the DeLand school Principal would not accept the advanced program I was on, even though I finished the year with straight A's.

Father quickly recuperated from his illness in Florida and he and Mother had a fine time during our stay. They often went fishing on the St. Johns River which at that time was a very quiet and peaceful place with no screaming power boats or water skiers. The days passed quickly and before we knew it the time had come when we had to return to Ohio. Dad took advantage of being in Florida to make a grand tour of the state on our way home. We drove down the east coast via U.S. 1 which was a two-lane road, still unpaved in some places. At Cocoa Father decided to take us to a Coast Guard Station which the map showed was located at a place called Cape Canaveral. We drove across a rickety old wood bridge, to what I now assume was Merritt Island, where Father apparently got off the main dirt road onto a sand lane. Soon the Chevvy was solidly stuck in the sand. By putting dead wood and palm fronds under the rear tires and with Mother at the wheel and Father and I pushing we finally got the car back onto more solid ground. That was enough! It was very hot and we were being eaten alive by hordes of hungry mosquitoes, so we returned to the mainland without ever seeing the Cape. Little did I realize that one day long in the future I would be supervising the launching of military missiles from those remote and forbidding sands!

We continued south, past Miami, on to the Florida Keys via the famous overseas highway. It was all very wild and remote then and tourist accommodations were infrequent and rather primitive. On the way back, when it was time to stop for the evening, there was simply nothing available. We drove and drove until long past dark, with Mother becoming more and more anxious, before we finally found a tourist cottage somewhere south of Miami. I can still remember that dark, deserted night on the Keys highway - there were no other cars on the road and there was not a light to be seen anywhere in front or behind us. It was as though we were suspended in a dark void.

Our return route took us across the Tamiami Trail and up the west coast of Florida. Except for the cities, it was a wild and remote country and we took care to always have enough gasoline and water with us. I do not know what our exact route was but we saw a lot of Florida including some of the attractions like Silver Springs. We returned to Barnesville, Ohio in late August and moved back into the old Eichhorn family house after our furniture was delivered from Cleveland.

In September Barbara and I were back in Jr. High School in Barnesville and Father was again operating the hatchery. The class I had first started school with was now a year ahead of me. Barnesville was a small country town of about 5000 and the school system served a large rural area. There were city kids and country kids and somehow I didn't fit in with either group. We lived five miles outside of town with no close neighbors, so I had no close friends from that time until I entered the Army four and one-half years later. After my ear operation, the Doctor had told my Mother that I could never engage in any hard contact sports such as football or basketball. It was just as well, since I've never liked any team sports anyway. I therefore concentrated on my studies and my hobbies. I continued to build and fly model airplanes and added photography as a hobby, which would become my main recreational interest in the years ahead. I set up a spare room on the second floor as my darkroom and taught myself to develop and print pictures taken with the simple box camera I had acquired somewhere along the way. I wanted a better camera in the worst way but there was no money for such frivolous things. Longingly I read ads for Leicas and Contaxes in Popular Photography, knowing, of course, they were only for the rich. But in the late thirties there was a camera that was often called the poor man's Leica - it was the American-made Argus - and I thought that someday I might somehow accumulate the $ 15.00 price of the cheapest model. It was my secret dream of 1938.

The Ohio Department of Education required that every eighth year student take a general intelligence test prior to graduating and entering High School. The purpose of the test was to evaluate the performance of all public and private schools in the state against the same standard. Test results were compared overall on a state level, as well as by school classification, as determined by enrollment. As in team sports, Barnesville was in informal competition with a rival nearby school in Woodsfield. In my class the teacher had taken an interest in a boy, whose name I have forgotten, and was convinced that he would attain a higher score than any student at Woodsfield, as she often informed the rest of the class. To hedge her hopes, she began giving the boy special tutoring after school several weeks before the test was given in April 1939. Though I was getting A's in all my subjects, I really didn't give the test much thought and made no real effort to study for it. When the scores were announced by the state no one was more surprised than I when it turned out that I had placed first in the entire state, with more than 45,000 students taking the test. My parents, my classmates, my teacher and the Principal were really just flabbergasted. I did not think the test overly difficult when I took it, but I didn't really expect to make 192 points out of a possible 200. As the state winner I was asked to attend the awards ceremony in Columbus, which would be attended by the State Superintendent of Schools, the head of the Department of Education and the

Governor of the state. It was a heady experience for a fourteen-year-old kid. Where they got the money, I will never know, but my folks somehow managed to buy me a new suit (which would also serve for my eighth grade graduation), have my portrait taken for the papers and the state awards program and, to my great surprise and delight, they gave me, as a special gift, a new Argus camera. Not the $ 15.00 Model A I had been drooling over, but the top-of-the-line C-2 which cost $ 25.00, plus another $ 5.00 for the all-leather case. Today, that doesn't seem like much, but in '39 it was probably a rather large chunk of my parents' "rainy day" savings. In the photographs taken of me at the awards ceremony, and even while I was giving the required short acceptance speech, I was proudly wearing that new camera around my neck. I still have the camera and it remains one of my precious possessions - a reminder of days long gone.

Sometime before the end of the school year Warren Davis, the Jr. High Principal,came to visit my Folks one evening. After a while I was sent to bed, but I rather expected Mr. Davis had come for some reason other than a social visit so, uncharacteristically, and without the knowledge of my parents, I sat at the head of the stairs to eavesdrop. It turned out I was right. His purpose was to suggest to my parents that my time was being wasted in a school system which was clearly geared to the average "C" student. He strongly recommended that I be sent to a special private school for gifted students and he had even prepared a list of several such schools with a summary of their ratings. It was, of course, a mission without hope. There was no way Father could come up with the tuition for such a school, much as he may have wished to do so. When it was clear that nothing along these lines could be done, Mr. Davis and Father engaged in a long discussion of current events, particularly the ominous news from Europe. It was, of course, a subject of much interest to me and I continued to listen to the discussion, since I had not been discovered. I have often wondered at the prescience of this small-town Principal. He told of his conviction that another world war would break out in Europe, probably within a few months and that after Britain, France and Germany had once again beaten each other to a stalemate, "Uncle Joe" (meaning Stalin) would very likely gobble up much of Europe. I always respected and admired Warren Davis and have often wondered what became of him in the years since. It was he who first introduced me to Bohr's theory of the atom, when he loaned me his college physics text to study in my spare time after school.

Looking back on my three and one half years in Barnesville High School I would say it was one of the loneliest periods of my life. Though I was elected President of our Freshman class, it was a case of knowing I would do a good job, rather than a matter of popularity. I continued to receive high grades and other scholastic honors, but athletic prowess, not academic achievement, paved the way to popularity at Barnesville High. I did, however enjoy being on the Debate Team and serving on the staff of the school newspaper and yearbook, as writer, artist and photographer. I never learned to dance, did not date in High School and was never invited to any of the city kids' parties. I had no really close friends. I devoted myself to studies, hobbies and

helping Dad with the many chores on the farm. Always essentially introverted, I gradually became something of a "loner", which, to a certain extent, I still am. But, thankfully, our's was a close-knit, happy family, with love enough for all. There were never any teen-age problems or serious growing pains to bring Mother and Father any grief. In retrospect, even though I experienced some unhappy times in my teen-age years, I am thankful that I grew up in a rural environment in the thirties, rather than in an urban environment anytime in the past three decades. Life was simpler and, I think, more fulfilling in those days.

THEV WAR COMES

No one who had even casually followed international events over the previous three or four years could possibly have been surprised by the Allied declaration of war on 3 September 1939. In truth, this new war had been coming since the Treaty of Versailles. Very quickly I became almost mesmerized by these events of history unfolding before my eyes. I almost never missed the morning and evening news broadcasts. We listened as Poland fell and wondered why the British and French failed to help. We had no way of knowing how weak the major Allies were, compared with Germany, at that time. The strange interlude of the "Phoney War" was puzzling until it was broken by the German invasion of Denmark and Norway in early April 1940, followed a month later by the incredible conquest of France and the Low Countries.

I recall clearly that it was sometime in 1940, perhaps after Dunkirk or during the Battle of Britain, that I became convinced in my own mind that we should become involved in the war on the side of Britain. My reading of history indicated that the United States, by its acquiescence in the Treaty of Versailles and by its almost total lack of interest in European problems during the preceding twenty years, almost certainly had to share some of the responsibility for the calamity of World War II. I remember discussing it with Dad after news broadcasts or while we sat on the lawn to rest after working. Early in the War he did not agree with me. Father felt, as did most Americans at that time, that it was Europe's war and we should never become involved. Isolationism was very strong but I could never bring myself to accept that concept.

During the final months of 1941 it should have become obvious to any reasonably alert person that we were very close to involvement in a shooting war. Actually, we were already in a de facto war with German submarines in the North Atlantic. But the most threatening situation lay far to the west, in the Pacific. War with Japan was clearly imminent and some sort of attack in Southeast Asia, possibly the Philippines, seemed most probable. When the blow fell on 7 December the shock was not caused so much by the actual attack as by the initial target selected - Pearl Harbor. It seemed to me almost inconceivable that the Japanese Navy could have the ability and the power to hit our main Pacific Fleet base. I doubt that anyone who experienced that day can ever forget what he/she was doing when news first came of the attack. That Sunday morning I had walked to town to attend a short meeting of leaders of the local Boy Scout Troop, since I was then serving as Leader of a Cub Scout Den. As usually happened, the meeting ran late and wasn't over until after 1400. I was returning home (it was a five mile walk) in rather a hurry, since I knew Mother would be saving lunch for me. Along the way I passed a man going in the opposite direction and as he passed he called out, "The Japs have bombed us!" I asked what he was talking about and he said someone else had told him and that was all he knew. At that point I was still about a mile and a half from home but I started running and never stopped until I reached the house, nearly exhausted. I asked Mother what had happened but she had no knowledge of any attack, as the radio had not

been on since early morning. It was already nearly 1430 when I turned the radio on. It was true! Scattered and often confusing reports were coming in from Washington. From that very first news report, I started writing a continuing log of radio news reports of the War which I continued without interruption until the day I was inducted into the Army. As I write this in the summer of 1983, I still have all of those carefully hand-written notes of the early days of our involvement in World War II. On 7 December I made 21 separate entries, the first at 1425 - "Jap Naval planes bombed Pearl Harbor, Honolulu and Manilla", and the last at 0107 (Monday),"Nicaragua and Panama declared war shortly after Costa Rica". Even now, as I look at these hundreds of laboriously written pages, I am still amazed that at the age of seventeen I had the interest and determination to keep such a log.

It was painful to accept what was clearly a severe defeat at Pearl Harbor. Within a few weeks it was obvious that Genda's brilliant planning, coupled with Fuchida's execution thereof, had hurt us far more than we were at first led to believe by the Government. Had Genda given higher priority to bombing the petroleum tank farms and the dry docks at Pearl and had Nagumo launched the second-strike air attack which Fuchida urged, we would have been in far worse circumstances. But, of course, this is hindsight and at the time there was more than enough destruction to contemplate. The early weeks of 1942 brought continued bad news, one defeat or withdrawal followed by another. It was terribly agonizing to realize that our Navy, which most Americans held in the highest regard (probably because of effective Navy propaganda), was suddenly too weak to relieve the troops in the Philippines and that our Government would simply abandon our forces on Bataan and Corregidor. Not until the Battle of the Coral Sea could one again enjoy the feeling of a degree of confidence. It would be very difficult to exaggerate the excitement I felt after the great Battle of Midway, our first truly unqualified victory in the Pacific. On that day in June it was clear that we were on the way back, at whatever cost and however long it might take.

During this, my Junior year in High School, my photography hobby began to pay off a bit. I took a part-time job, after school and on Saturdays, working at the Lappert Studio, the only photo studio and shop in Barnesville. In addition to working in the retail store, I did most of the amateur photofinishing, developing films and making prints. My employer quickly gained confidence in my ability and I worked pretty much on my own. For a work week that ranged from 20 to 30 hours I was paid the magnificent sum of $ 3.00 per week to start. By mid-winter I was making $ 8.00 per week and I recall receiving a $ 5.00 bonus for Christmas! Little as it was, I did have spending money for the first time in my life, since Barb and I never received allowances.

I turned 18 on my birthday in June and immediately registered with Selective Service. I was, of course, exempt from the draft as long as I was in school. This, however, was not really a matter of comfort to me, for by now I was almost obsessed with the idea of entering the Service to do what I sincerely regarded as my duty. The classmates I had started first grade with were now entering military service and I began to curse the fact that I was a year behind in school. It seemed likely to me that if, in the normal course of events, I entered the

Service in the summer of '43, and allowing for perhaps a year of training, the war might well be over before I could do my part. I could never understand those who would try anything to delay or avoid service (and there were many) because I would never have entertained such a thought.

During the summer and fall of 1942 we followed with fascination the see-saw battle in North Africa between the Afrika Korps and the Eighth Army. Though he was on the other side, Rommel became something of a hero to me, and I still retain the highest regard for him. In my view he represented all that was honorable and soldierly in the German Wehrmacht. He was, without question, one of the great Captains of history and in World War II I would rank him right at the top, equalled or exceeded in ability only by MacArthur.

As my Senior year progressed, I began to make plans for enlisting in the Service. My diary records that on 16 December I went to see Donald Shepherd, our High School Principal, and Silas Warfield, our Superintendent of Schools,to ascertain if I could still get my diploma if I enlisted following mid-term exams after the first of the year. I was enrolled in the college preparatory course and had taken a greater than normal course load each year. Both Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Warfield tried to dissuade me from leaving before the end of the school year, but both agreed that by the time I had finished the first half of my Senior year I would have completed more than enough course work to receive my diploma.

I had cleared the first hurdle and now I had to get my parents' permission. I can find no mention of discussing this with Mother and Dad in my '42 diary and I no longer recall the details. I do not remember it as difficult or painful because both Mother and Father were perfectly aware that I was only counting the days until I could go into the Service. I was not happy in high school and I was bored with classes which offered me no real challenge. They both realized that I would be drafted shortly after graduating, and though I know they wanted to keep me with them as long as possible, they respected my wishes and gave the permission I needed to enlist. Actually by this time in the War the Government had eliminated enlistments, as such, and required that those who wanted to enter the armed forces voluntarily would have to do so within the Selective Service system. That is, one would simply volunteer that his name be placed at the top of the list of men covered by the next draft call.

INTO THE ARMY

On 4 January 1943 I recorded in my diary, "Saw Bennett tonight about enlisting." I do not recall who "Bennett" was but assume he was head of the local Selective Service Office. I took my mid-term examinations on 21-22 January and thus had burned the last bridge behind me. On the 13th of February I reported to the local Draft Board at 0715, was sworn in as a Private in the Army of the United States, and with other volunteers and draftees entered one of three chartered buses which took us to Columbus for our induction physicals. The exam took about 90 minutes and I sweated it out until I was told that I had passed. My only real concern was my myopia, which I already knew would prevent me from entering the flight training that I wanted above all else. We returned home the same night and I continued with school and my part-time work at the studio until the day before I actually left home for Service.

My cousin, Marguerite Libbey, came down from Cleveland to visit a couple days before I was to leave for the Army. On 19 February I put in my last appearance at school and said goodbye to Lapperts at the studio. That afternoon I cleaned up my room for the last time and packed some clothing and personal items in a suitcase. We had been told that each man could carry one suitcase with him to the induction center at Fort Hayes in Columbus. That evening we had sort of a going away party at home. I took a number of flash photos and received several little gifts from Mother, Dad and Barb. I recall that I did not sleep well that night - troubled, I suppose, by the sort of thoughts any eighteen-year-old would have when leaving home for the Army in time of war, with the future as uncertain as anything can be.

I was scheduled to leave Barnesville via train at noon on 20 February for Fort Hayes in Columbus. My biggest concern that morning was for Mother - I was sure she would break down at the station as I left. I had planned to say goodbye at the house and walk to the train station but, of course, Mother and Dad would have none of that. There was a large group of young men leaving that day - a Saturday - and the depot was crowded with inductees, relatives and friends. As we were called to board and were saying our last goodbyes, I was amazed to see that my Mother's eyes were dry, and even more amazed to see tears streaming down my Father's face. It was not until several years later that Father told me Mother had wept all night in bed before I left, but, determined not to have me see her cry at the station, she had shed her last tear that day before breakfast.

The train arrived in Columbus at 1500 where we were loaded on trucks for the short trip to Fort Hayes. There we were registered, subjected to a minor physical and marched to a barracks where we were issued two wool blankets, two sheets and a pillow case. Later, we had our first Army meal (not as bad as many of us expected) in a large mess hall and then returned to our barracks. Lights out was at 2100 and my Army life and my War had begun.

Fort Hayes served solely as a reception center where inductees were issued uniforms, run through preliminary processing, classified and then sent to basic training bases. On my second day in the Army we were roused out by bugle call at 0330 then simply waited around until 0600 when we were marched to breakfast. We had been introduced to the ancient Army operation known as "hurry up and wait". We then went to clothing issue where each man received two heavy cotton barracks bags, two sets of underwear, three pair of socks, a pair of G.I. boots, two Class A wool uniforms (O.D.'s), overcoat, blouse, field jacket, belt, two sets of fatigues, fatigue hat, and a pair of canvas leggings. Next we signed up for G.I. insurance and then took the Army Classification Tests.

These tests included three basic sections, each having 140 questions. The first part consisted mainly of simple math and vocabulary, the second was a mechanical aptitude test and the third was a radio code aptitude test. I did very well on the first two, getting 134 on each, but only got a 97 on the radio test.

The following day we had our classification interviews. Each man was quizzed by three officers who asked a variety of questions about education, experience and personal preferences. I requested that I be assigned to Air Corps ground crew. The air arm had always been organized as a corps in the Army, much like the Signal Corps and the Medical Corps, but by 1943 it had been re-designated as the U.S. Army Air Force. Nevertheless, from force of habit it was still frequently referred to as the Air Corps. After the interviews we had our first "shots". This was something I did not look forward to, and it did not help to have the fellows who went through first warn us about the "big square needle". These first shots were for small pox and typhoid and were not as bad as I had feared. With the rest of the day free several of us went to town to mail our suitcases and civilian clothing home.

The following day a group of us were introduced to that timeless Army custom, kitchen police, more familiarly known as K.P. We were awakened at 0330 and worked almost steadily in the main mess hall until 2100, a very long day of backbreaking work. The only rest we received was the half hour we had for each meal. I was so tired I was in a state of stupor by the time I hit my "sack" that night. To this day I cannot understand why the Army can't divide K.P. into two more reasonable eight or nine hour shifts.

On 24 February I found my name on the shipping orders. We turned in our bedding, packed our bags and hauled them about a quarter mile to the train station, where we entrained at noon. We had day coaches that must have been old when Teddy Roosevelt was President. They were filthy dirty inside, with hard cane seats and dirty windows which were frozen closed with years of paint and grime. There were no toilet or washing facilities. During the War the Army had an insane regulation that soldiers on shipment must wear Class A dress uniforms, instead of fatigues, which would have been far more sensible. As a consequence, after only a few hours on one of those dirty troop trains, with coal-fired steam locomotives, everyone had a dirty uniform which would have to be dry-cleaned immediately upon arrival.

A Lieutenant was in charge of the train, with a Corporal or Sergeant assigned to be responsible for each coach. The Corporal in our car was wearing Air Force issue sun glasses and had a fine tan which I knew he hadn't gotten in Ohio that winter. Thus, before the train left I was predicting to my friends that we were headed for Florida. The Army, of course, never told troops their destination because of "security" - as though a German spy would give a damn where a bunch of raw recruits were going!

The train included an Army kitchen car, which was simply a baggage car with a field kitchen and serving line installed. We ate from our mess kits and washed them in large garbage cans filled with hot wash and rinse water. Each coach was served in turn and after going through the chow line we returned to our seats to eat, provided we had been careful to not spill our meals along the way as the cars rocked and rattled down the track. There was K.P. on the train also, but I managed to escape it on this trip. After leaving Cincinnati, the train headed due south, as I had guessed. We passed through Knoxville about midnight. It was next to impossible to get any real rest on the train because of the noise and the very rough ride produced by the ancient carriages on the cars.

The second day we were in South Carolina and passed through Columbia. The train moved rather slowly and seemed to have very low priority. We always stopped at sidings to let commercial passenger trains pass and even had to make way for freights sometimes. It did not help us to digest our sorry Army chow when we watched a civilian Pullman pass with the passengers having supper in the dining car, eating on a linen tablecloth, with a colored porter waiting on them. We wondered about those slogans that "nothing is too good for our boys in uniform". We passed through Jacksonville that night and the next morning the train commander told us we were headed for St. Petersburg.

We arrived in St. Pete at 1130 (26 Feb.), detrained and were marched to a down-town restaurant which the Army had taken over to operate as a mess hall. After lunch we were marched to the Vinoy Park Hotel on the bay, which was to be our "barracks". It was a beautiful tourist hotel which the Army had simply taken over. However, on the inside the Army had stripped it of all furnishings and decorations down to the bare walls and concrete floors. The rooms were furnished with two or three double-deck bunks and one table with lamp. I was separated from my friends from home and assigned to a room with three strangers who were all rather crude types I would never have picked as roommates had I been given any choice. To make matters worse, our barracks bags had been shipped to the wrong hotel. We were issued bedding and gas masks. We were in the Air Force, as I had hoped.

St. Pete was to be my basic training center and I was to remain there for just over one month. The purpose of this facility was simply to turn a bunch of civilians into soldiers. Sgt. Grant, a regular Army Staff Sergeant was responsible for the group I was in. He was stern but also very considerate and helpful and the first thing I learned from him was that Privates do NOT salute Sergeants! I think everyone in our group liked Grant and we tried to do our best for him.

We were required to carry our gas masks at ALL times from 0500 to 1700. I assume this was one way of instilling discipline, since I doubt that there was any danger of a gas attack on St. Petersburg! One of the first things we learned was how to make beds in the Army style. The blanket had to be TIGHT and a quarter tossed in the middle of the bed had to BOUNCE, not just plop there. On the first day there Sgt. Grant marched us out to a small park where we sat down in a circle and he explained why we were there, what our duties would be and what sort of schedule we could expect. He made it clear that we would be in training EVERY day, including week-ends, with no days off until we completed basic. He then said he would answer any questions we had about the Air Force, or our training, however silly they might seem. And he did, patiently and completely. He is one person I still remember with fondness, though I never saw him again after I left St. Petersburg.

Another thing we learned very quickly was to memorize our Army Serial Numbers. I can never remember my Social Security Number but I shall remember my Army Serial Number till my last breath - 35602859. The rule was that officers' numbers began with a zero, Regular Army enlisted men's began with a one, the earlier enlistees' numbers began with a two and draftees' numbers began with a three. Since I had to actually go in under the Selective Service System, my number started with a three. For my first month or so of Service all my paper work listed my number as 35602859-V, to signify that I had volunteered. However, somewhere along the way the Air Force dropped the (-V) and from then on I was in the records just like any other draftee. That sort of bugged me and still does to this day.

Our basic training could be broken down into two categories, physical and mental. The physical training consisted of learning to march, do close-order drill, calisthenics, running, going over obstacle courses, learning the Manual of Arms and elementary Judo. We also learned how to serve on Guard Duty and to "walk our post in a military manner". Marching and drilling came rather easily to me, since it was only a matter of learning the meaning of the commands and how to execute them quickly and correctly. Most of the marching and drilling was on city streets or paved parking lots and I had a very bad time with my feet. I have flat arches and my journal is full of comments about how painful my feet were every night. I hated calisthenics but did the best I could. The obstacle courses were sort of fun except for the damned high wood walls we were supposed to get over somehow. I could never master that and sometimes I would slip around the outside when the Sergeant wasn't watching closely. We learned how to handle rifles and do the Manual of Arms with ancient Enfield rifles, but there weren't enough to go around and some guys always had to use phoney guns made from wood. We had many gas mask drills, parades and evening Retreat formations.

The weather was quite variable - some days so hot that our wool uniforms were quickly drenched with perspiration and other days cold enough to wear long johns and gloves while marching. Often we were caught by sudden Florida showers without our raincoats and were quickly drenched to the skin.

I had to serve on Guard Duty four different times, generally four hours on and four hours off for a 24 hour period. Most of the time we simply paced back and forth for four hours in front of one of the hotel entrances. It seemed, and was, sort of silly, but I suppose it was the only way to teach new recruits the responsibility of being on military guard.

We were required to attend what seemed like an endless series of Air Force training films and lectures by Non-coms and Officers. As one would expect, some of these were interesting and some were terribly boring. The lectures were generally given out-of-doors while most of the films were shown in downtown commercial theaters which the Air Force took over during the morning. I listed all of these in my journal and have summarized the subject matter below:

Purpose of the War	Duties of a Soldier	Basic Mathematics
Aerial Gunnery	Government Insurance	War Bonds
Articles of War	Military Courtesy	Sex and V.D.
Swimming	Exterior Guard Duty	First Aid
Interior Guard Duty	Aircraft Construction	General Orders
Screening Smokes	Poison Gas Defense	Incendiaries
Army Organization	Aircraft Identification	Why We Fight
Air Force Ordnance	Ammunition Storage	Citizenship
Concealment & Camouflage	Cal. 50 Machinegun	Small Arms Care

In my spare time I also had to get a "G.I." haircut, for which I waited in line 90 minutes. I was assigned to K.P. three times during basic training and learned to "fly the China Clipper", which, of course, was the mechanical dishwasher. That was the next to worst job on K.P., heavy, terribly hot work with almost no time to rest. The worst job by far was cleaning pots and pans, which were very large, both in size and quantity, and all had to be washed by hand.

We learned to dig foxholes and slit trenches, which is easier said than done in Florida sand! By mid-March we had completed our shots for tetanus and typhoid and had been issued our Air Force insignia. I had also received my first Army pay - a magnificent $ 10.00. I used part of it to buy some souvenirs to send to Mother, Dad and Barb. On 13 March we were ordered to change to our summer khaki uniforms which we called "suntans". The Army always changed Class A uniforms on a specific date, regardless of current weather conditions.

In between training sessions and drill we had to take additional classification tests, mostly in math and mechanical aptitude. I thought they were surprisingly simple, but few others agreed. After completing all the tests we had our final classification interviews. After looking at my test scores the Captain who interviewed me suggested strongly that I apply for Officer Candidate School. I declined because I had no real desire to be a "90 day Wonder" and I thought that going to O.C.S. would probably reduce my chances for getting in a combat Air Group. He tried to get me to change my mind but finally said I could have my choice of Aircraft Mechanic, Radio or Armament schools. I had asked for the Photography School at Lowry Field but he said there were no openings available at that time. I had no strong

interest in Radio and I knew Mother did not want me to become a mechanic, so, by the process of elimination, I elected to go to Armament School. Besides, that sounded interesting and would give me the chance to work on planes.

One thing I sorely missed during Basic Training was the opportunity to know what was going on in the War. Without a radio I was completely out of touch and I regretted being unable to continue the War log I had kept for over a year. Once in a while I would come upon a LIFE magazine in the day room which always had some good war coverage. We received very little time off but when I did get a pass I walked into town and went to a movie, primarily to see the newsreel.

Shortly after I had arrived at St. Pete I came down with what I thought was a bad cold, but it was apparently a more serious bug. I felt lousy and had a fever for several days. Then I developed an earache which stayed with me off and on for most of the time I was there. At first I was reluctant to go on sick call but finally did after I became more and more worried about having a bad infection. It was the same ear which had been operated on in '32 and by the time I went on sick call it had started to drain. The A.F. Doctor, a young Captain, said it was nothing to worry about, and that it would clear up in a week or so. He gave me a couple aspirin and returned me to duty. I never went back on sick call, even though my ear continued to cause me pain and discomfort and was a source of constant worry all during basic training. It probably did not help that I was not eating well. In those days I was sort of a picky eater and I just hadn't gotten used to Army food. We often had to stand in line for 45 minutes at the mess hall and lots of times I felt it just wasn't worth the effort, so I simply skipped a lot of meals. Besides, I had been receiving packages from Mother and my Aunt Esther shortly after I had been able to tell them my location. Those packages contained lots of cookies and even cupcakes, which, with a pint of milk, often served as my supper.

By the latter part of March I was beginning to get used to the Army, though I still had periods of real homesickness. I still had the same crummy roommates and one thing I hadn't gotten used to was their foul language and amorality. All my life I had been sheltered from the more coarse aspects of life. I was taught the Victorian virtues of honesty, courtesy and morality - especially respect for women. I don't recall ever hearing my Father utter a word of profanity in my presence. The subject of sex was never addressed in our house, though growing up on a farm one couldn't help observing something about the facts of life. My parents could never bring themselves to tell me about the birds and bees, though Mother did slip a small booklet on the subject into my suitcase before I left home. In any event, I had a lot to learn and hear when I entered the army and it took some time to get used to it. It would not take long before I, too, had acquired a fairly respectable Army vocabulary!

On Sunday, 28 March I was placed on shipping orders for the following day - my Basic Training was over. I was given instructions and issued a second set of leggings and seven Air Force shoulder patches. My destination was 618-A, whatever that meant, though I fully expected to

go to the Armament School in Denver. I was rousted out at 0200 on Monday morning, simply because the rest of my Squadron was on K.P. that day. I turned in my bedding, packed my bags and dressed in the usual Class A wool uniform for travel. I was instructed to carry my overcoat, blouse, mess kit, toilet articles and, of course, my gas mask. And then, in the time-honored Army custom of "hurry up and wait" I waited - and waited - and waited. We finally entrained at 1830! This troop train would be better than the last. We had honest-to-goodness Pullmans, albeit a bit old, with three men to a compartment. There was a real toilet and plenty of hot and cold water, and even a porter to make up the beds! This was really living, except that we still had the usual cattle-car Army kitchen, instead of a diner.

The train rumbled north during the night, passing through Atlanta and Chattanooga. In the morning, during a brief stopover in Nashville, the Red Cross passed out coffee and cookies. The meals on the train were reasonably good, considering the very adverse conditions under which they were prepared. During the night we crossed the Mississippi River at St. Louis and I was very disappointed not to have seen it. Never having been west of Ohio, I was very impressed with the flat, treeless, almost unpopulated land which we passed through in the Plains States. On Thursday, 1 April, we were in Colorado and about noon we detrained at our destination, Buckley Field, near Denver. We were trucked to the field, issued bedding, given instructions, assigned to a barracks and promptly required to scrub it down from end to end.

ARMAMENT SCHOOL

We had no assigned duty on our first day at Buckley. I took advantage of the time to send my uniform to the base cleaner, get a haircut, and polish my shoes. I also picked up a book of 10 tickets to the base movie theater for $ 1.20. I was pleased to discover that there was an excellent P.X.(meaning Post Exchange, a hangover, I suppose, from Army frontier days) on the field. The following day we all took a physical examination for aerial gunnery school. I passed everything but the vision test, and so qualified for overseas duty but not gunnery school. On Sunday we were officially welcomed to Buckley Field by the C.O. at the base theater. The following day, 5 April, we started our Armament class work.

Generally, mornings were assigned for routine things like drilling, calisthenics, gas mask drills, obstacle courses, squadron duty and barracks cleanup. The actual class work started right after lunch, ran all afternoon, with ten minute breaks each hour, and then resumed after supper with an evening session until 2200. Our first assignment was to learn all about the Browning Caliber 50 aerial machine gun. We had to memorize the names of each of the 175 parts, learn how to strip it down completely, then re-assemble it, eventually while blindfolded.

I had scarcely gotten started in class when, the evening of 6 April, I suddenly became very ill with a high fever. The following day I tried to remain on duty but by mid-afternoon I could hardly stand up and had to go on sick call. With a fever of 104 degrees I was immediately put in an ambulance and sent to the base hospital. That night my right ear again began to drain - obviously it was a flare-up of the same infection I had in St. Pete, only this time much worse. I was sent to a specialist in the E.N.T. clinic, a young Captain who seemed to know his business. He immediately put me on one of the new Sulfa drugs to combat the infection. I went to the clinic every day and after about four days me fever abated. I was extremely worried about my ear but I never told my parents that I was in the hospital. I tried to be cheerful in my letters, even though I surely didn't feel that way. While in the hospital, I received from my Aunt Esther (Essie) a nice G.E. portable radio. I was delighted with it, as I had greatly missed being able to keep up with world news. It was not a portable in the sense of today's radios, since it used vacuum tubes and four large, heavy "A" and "B" batteries. It was about the size and weight of a typewriter.

By the third week of April my ear was much improved and by the latter part of the month I knew I was getting better when I was assigned to light K.P. work in the hospital kitchen. I was finally released from the hospital on 2 May and assigned to a new barracks on the other side of the field. Though still rather weak, I had to carry all my gear over there, making two trips. The E.M. barracks at the newer bases, such as Buckley Field, were long, narrow single story wood-framed buildings covered on the outside simply with tarpaper. Inside double-deck bunks were lined up along each wall. At one end was the latrine and at the other a separate, private room where the resident C.Q. (the Non-com, usually a Corporal or Sergeant, in Charge of Quarters) lived.

In the center of the building were three or four coal-burning space heater stoves. At older, longer established bases most barracks were two-story buildings, with the second floor exactly like the first.

On Monday, 3 May, I started my Armament classes again. The first couple days were easy, as I had already had that subject matter. I continued with the normal training/class schedule, except that I was excused from doing the obstacle course for a couple weeks and had to return to the clinic for check-ups once a week for three weeks. In my spare time I went to the P.X. or base theater, polished shoes, sewed on my shoulder patches, etc. I really enjoyed having the radio. We usually received one day off each week and I sometimes went in to Denver via bus and streetcar. It was a very nice city and the people were surprisingly friendly to Servicemen.

One of the new drills we had was a gas mask drill with real gas. We went to a large building where we put our masks on "by the numbers" before entering. After standing around for a while in the building we were told to take our masks off. The building was filled with tear gas and we quickly found ourselves rushing for the exit! A gas mask was a very uncomfortable thing to wear but this little exercise demonstrated its potential value in a very effective way. In class we went from the Cal. 50 machine gun to the Cal. 30 (which, by comparison, seemed like a toy) then to the 20mm cannon and, finally, the 37mm cannon, which had 200 parts to memorize. One time we were sent to the malfunction range where nine Cal. 50 machineguns were set up to fire at a target with real ammunition. Each gun had deliberately been bugged by removing a part or installing a damaged part so that it would jam or misfire. Every student had to fire each gun, and determine exactly what the malfunction was and correct it. I found it rather easy and was most impressed by the noise those guns made!

We also had lectures on the old Springfield rifle and went to the rifle range where each man fired 20 rounds at a standard target at 200 yards. I had often engaged in target practice at home with a .22 rifle with Mother and Dad, so firing the Springfield was nothing new for me, except for the recoil, and I scored 80 out of 100, the highest in my class. I was truly surprised at the number of soldiers who had never fired any sort of gun and were actually very apprehensive about it.

The weather at this time in Colorado was very unsettled and we had combinations of rain, snow and sleet all through May. The ground was usually very muddy and it was rather cold most of the time. We usually had inspections on Saturday mornings, in the time-honored Army manner. On 22 May we were inspected by the Base Commander, Gen. Lawton, and we really prepared for that one!

In mid-May I was promoted to Private First Class (as were all other students who had not gotten into any trouble) and was paid $ 20.00. Up to that time I had been paid only $ 10.00 in three months. We finally finished our class work at Buckley on 22 May and on Monday the 24th we were loaded on large horse vans (perhaps from the Cavalry?) and moved to nearby Lowry Field for the advanced Armament School.

At Lowry Field we were immediately assigned to the K.P. Squadron and marched to our barracks. We were not issued any sort of bedding. There were two rather soiled blankets on each cot and that was all. We assumed we would be on K.P. just one or two days - little did we realize it would last a full week! For some reason, I escaped K.P. the first day, but was placed on barracks detail, instead. However, on the 26th I was assigned to "C" shift K.P. We started at 1700 and worked all night until we were relieved at 0600 in the morning. The base was on an around-the-clock training schedule and so, of course, were the mess halls. I was on K.P. every night Wednesday through Sunday. One night I had a comparatively easy job, but every other night I worked on the China Clipper. The next Monday, the 31st, I had barely gotten to bed after K.P. when they rolled us out to be assigned to a new barracks to start our advanced training. We were finally issued bedding, plus a pillow, mattress and pair of rubber overshoes, after which we went to a theater to receive the usual welcoming and orientation lectures. Our actual training at Lowry started on Tuesday, 1 June. Again I was assigned to the night, or "C" shift.

Our routine schedule was to roll out at 1000 for calisthenics and drill in the morning, followed by lunch. It was hard to get used to since we would have breakfast at 0100, just before going to bed and then get nothing to eat after rising, until lunch time. After lunch we had a one hour session each day on aircraft recognition. We had to be able to quickly identify the silhouettes of all current Allied and Axis military aircraft. This was really a snap for me because of my long time interest in aviation - I could already identify virtually every aircraft in the sky, both military and civilian. On quizzes I always got the highest score in my class and almost never missed. We had tests wherein slides of various planes were quickly flashed on a screen and we had to write down the make and model of the plane. After the A.C. recognition class we had free time until after supper, when our Armament classes began at 1830. These classes lasted till 0030 when we went to the mess hall for our 0100 breakfast.

The subjects we studied in class included the following:

Wiring & electrical circuits
Gas warfare
Bombs & fuzes
Explosives & ammunition
A-2 Bomb release
Sperry gun sight
Sperry upper turret
Consolidated tail turret
Bomb racks
Bomb shackles
Aerial torpedoes
Hydraulics
A-1 Arming device
Sperry ball turret
Martin upper turret
Ammunition belting

The classes were usually in the form of lectures and demonstrations, with occasional training films. Oral and written quizzes were given almost every session. I was so impressed and interested in the powered gun turrets that I requested to be sent to the special turret school after I finished at Lowry. I was sure I could get the assignment because of my high grades, but that was not to be.

My high school Graduation Day was on 3 June, though, of course, I could not be there. I was graduated with honors and was Valedictorian

of my class. Barbara, who was a Junior, stood in for me and collected my diploma, certificates and other awards - she told me she made several trips to the stage on my behalf. The following day was my birthday and I received gifts from home and from Essie. It all made me a bit homesick, something I thought I was well over. As a sort of gift from the Air Force we were issued footlockers that same day - a great improvement over living out of barracks bags.

We were given one day off each week and mine was Saturday. My first pass was on the 12th and I went to Denver where I went to the Telenews theater and then to two regular movies. I also had a very nice restaurant meal. Sometimes I went to an amusement park near Denver called Lakeside, where I went on the various rides. One Saturday two other fellows and I went on a train excursion from Moffat Station. The train went about 75 miles up into the Rockies, going through 31 tunnels on the way. To one from the mid-west it was a marvelous experience - the beauty of the mountains was beyond anything I had ever experienced. My only regret was that I had no camera to record the trip. I had not taken my Argus with me into the service because cameras were not allowed on training bases. This train trip cost all of $ 1.45.

My back pay finally caught up with me on 16 June when I received $ 112.73 in cash. It was the most money I had ever had at one time in my life and I sent most of it home to my parents. Towards the end of the month I received an additional $ 47.50 so I no longer had to count every penny.

During the last half of June we frequently went on cross-country hikes of up to seven miles in place of having calisthenics every morning. This was in preparation for our final exercise at Denver. We finished Armament School on 4 July and were issued musette packs and harnesses, a horrid piece of equipment, probably leftover from 1918. All soldiers who finished at Lowry had to go on a one-week field exercise at a place called Camp Bizerte, located some distance from Denver - exactly where, I never knew. On 5 July trucks loaded us and our gear and headed for the location of our field exercises. We were dropped off with full packs seven miles from the camp and hiked the rest of the way. Upon arrival we were assigned to a bivouac area where we pitched our tents and camouflaged them with vegetation. By current backpacking standards, these tents were really terrible. Each soldier carried one "shelter half", one tent pole and two wool G.I. blankets. Two men connected their shelter halves together at the ridge and pitched them as a sort of pup tent without floor or insect netting. They tended to leak at the joined ridge line and provided very little protection from a driving rain. We had no sleeping pads of any sort, and found the ground rather hard! We also found that this area was heavily populated with an unusually vicious species of ant.

We ate from a field kitchen, using mess kits which were cleaned by scrubbing well with sand. Water was trucked in and placed in Lister bags and was purified with iodine, which made it taste rather bad.

Our schedule at Camp Bizerte was quite full. We learned how to fuze and load 500 and 1000 pound bombs, using a wrecked B-25 fuselage as

a test facility. We fired Enfields at the rifle range twice, the second time for the record. I qualified as Marksman the first time. We also fired Carbines and Thompson sub-machineguns at the range. One day we practiced camouflaging a wrecked B-24 bomber - something we never had to do again, even overseas. And, of course, there was the usual calisthenics, close order drill, manual of arms, obstacle courses and even K.P. in the field kitchen. One night we were treated to a concert by the Lowry Air Force Band which was very enjoyable.

There was often talk about rattlesnakes, though I don't think anyone ever saw one in the camp. One night about midnight there was an awful scream near our tent and I heard several cries of "snake, snake!" Two guys had jumped out of their sacks taking the tent with them down the slope. It turned out that a couple jokers had placed a hemp rope under their neighbors' tent in a curved form and then started pulling on it about midnight, giving, apparently, the sensation of a large snake moving under the tent. A little comedy always helps.

Camp Bizerte was located on the edge of what looked like a dry river bed. It was, in fact, an arroyo and one day after we had been having a light rain we were amazed to see a wall of roaring, muddy water come rushing down that dry bed. It was so strong that it took out our Army bridge and washed away a bunch of mess supplies. At that time I had never heard of such a thing and was completely astounded as to where such a flood of water could have come from without warning.

On the 12th of July we broke camp and hiked out to the highway where trucks returned us to Lowry Field. The next day we were formally graduated from Armament School and received our diplomas and Armorer's sleeve patches. But Lowry was not yet through with us, for on the next day we all pulled 12 hours of K.P.

On 15 July we entrained at 1030 for Salt Lake City Air Base. This was the best troop train shipment I experienced in the Army. We not only had Pullman sleepers, but regular dining cars, as well, and our route took us straight across the Rockies with the most magnificent views one could hope for. The following day we detrained at Salt Lake A.F.B. where we went through a clothing inspection and were given another overseas physical. We were issued some new clothing, pistol belt, helmet liner, the infamous musette bag and harness, two wool blankets, a shelter half with pole and pegs, a first aid pouch, canteen and a new barracks bag. Then we were assigned to barracks and had chow.

The following day we were placed on shipping alert, but had little to do other than police our barracks area and stand Retreat that evening. The term, "police" has nothing to do with security, of course, but simply means clean up. When policing an area we went by the old Army slogan, "If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, pick it up; if you can't pick it up, paint it!"

On Sunday, the 18th I was on K.P. all day, but it was the easiest I had ever pulled - the work wasn't too hard and the food was very good. The next day saw the usual routine of calisthenics, drill and a run over the obstacle course. I was scheduled to ship out on the 20th, so I dressed in my Class A O.D.'s packed my bags and hauled them to the

dayroom to be picked up. Then we were marched to the R.R. station where we had two roll calls, after which, to our amazement and disgust, we were marched right back to a Provisional Squadron on the base and assigned to another barracks!! This sort of Army nonsense defies any and all reason or logic and one learns quickly not to ask why. So we drew bedding again, unpacked our bags and had supper followed by Retreat. I did learn one thing from this foolish exercise; my shipping orders indicated that I had been assigned to a new unit, the 451st Heavy Bombardment Group, which was formed in Tucson in May.

I pulled K.P. again on the 21st - this time in the Base Exchange. Even though I worked on pots and pans it was a fairly good day, as I could make myself as many chocolate malts as I wanted and the meals were better than in the mess hall. I even got off early enough to go into Salt Lake City to look it over and go to a movie. On the next day, without any warning, I was again rousted out at 0300 to go on K.P. in the Squadron mess. That day was much rougher as we had a couple of the worst "pushers" I had ever encountered. A "pusher" was a soldier, usually a Corporal, with a I.Q. of about 29 who spent his time in the mess overseeing the work of K.P.'s and pushing them to get the work done. I always thought it unfortunate that Hitler didn't choose to exterminate K.P."Pushers" rather than innocent Jews.

On Saturday the 24th I came down with my first bad case of Army diarrhea, commonly called the G.I. shits or more simply, the G.I.'s. This was fairly common in the Army in spite of the fact that its cause was well known - improperly washed cooking or eating utensils. It was not funny - it usually just knocked a person out for about 24 hours. It started with gas on the stomach which had the sensation of rotten eggs and proceeded from there. Fortunately, the Army medics had some pills which would quickly stop it and after going on sick call I was feeling better by evening. Those of us who were assigned to the 451st Bomb Group were again placed on shipping alert that day.

There seemed to be no escape from it - on Sunday night I was again put on K.P. in the Base Exchange - but at least it was better than in the regular mess hall. On Monday morning, 26 July, those of us in the 451st were told that we would ship out at 1630 that day. I expected another fiasco, but at the appointed hour we loaded into a bunch of 6 X 6 Army trucks and moved out in a long convoy at 1730. We had been told that we were going to Wendover Field in Utah, a distance of 125 miles. We passed along the Great Salt Lake and then across a bleak and desolate desert. It was like a moonscape. We arrived at Wendover at 2300 and were assigned to a tent area where large pyramidal six-man tents were already erected. We threw our blankets on the canvas cots which were already in the tent, unpacked some of our gear and wearily went to sleep.

The following morning I learned that I had been assigned to the 726th Squadron and since I had no duty that day I spent my time organizing my gear and looking around the field. Wendover was a desolate place - located in the desert close to the Utah/Nevada state line. There were several large hangars on the field, some support buildings and the usual PX, Service Club, and base theater. There were barracks for the officers but all enlisted men lived in pyramidal tents. I had my first close look at a B-24 on the line that day. I was mildly disappointed to be assigned to a Heavy Bombardment Group, as I had always sort of wanted to be in a Fighter Group. And if it had to be bombers, I would probably have preferred B-17s at that point in time. B-24s were not especially glamorous in appearance and looked a bit awkward on the ground - they just didn't have the aura of a "Flying Fortress". But, like pelicans, though looking clumsy on the ground, B-24s were a thing of beauty in the air and I very quickly came to love them.

Our first duty was to construct frames and erect tents for our armament shop and equipment storage and to build work benches and storage racks. I quickly became a fair carpenter, if not a cabinet maker. We also constructed firing ranges for pistol and sub-machine gun use. It was very hot and dry at Wendover with wind-blown sand which seeped into everything. Strangely, though, we had a real gully-washer rain on 6 August which flooded all the tents and soaked most of our gear which had been left on the ground.

We were on a two-shift work schedule and I was assigned to "B" shift, from 1600 to 2400. Our planes were D and E models, with manually-operated, flexible nose guns (no turret), designated for training. Usually they were parked in a row on the ramp where we worked on them in the open. When the weather was very bad or when major work, such as engine changes or structural repair,was necessary a plane would be moved into one of the huge hangars, where two aircraft could be serviced at one time. I was intrigued by a strange design feature of these hangars. In addition to the two great sliding doors which were opened to admit aircraft, there were two other smaller sliding doors in the top center of the hangar which extended from the top of the regular doors almost to the roof-line. This would make a large opening like an inverted T, the purpose of which puzzled me. I thought the extra doors might be to clear the vertical tail fin of a very large plane, but there was no plane that large - or so I thought at the time. About a year later I realized that my guess had been correct, after all. Wendover Field had been planned especially as a training base for B-29 Groups, and those extra hangar doors were to clear the tail fins of B-29s. It was at Wendover Field that the 509th Composite Group, which dropped the two nuclear bombs on Japan, had completed its secret training prior to its fateful assignment at Tinian. Apparently the 451st Bomb Group had been sent there to make use of the facility before the B-29s arrived.

While at Wendover I spent a week in Driver's School, learning to drive heavy vehicles and afterwards was licensed to drive anything from a Jeep to heavy 6 X 6 cargo trucks. Since I had driven a lot at home, it came rather easily to me except for learning to double-clutch the non-synchro transmissions of the heavy vehicles. In one exercise we mired a heavy truck to its axles in a salt marsh and then extricated it with powered winches.

Most of our armament work consisted of cleaning and adjusting machine guns for aerial gunnery practice and loading "Blue Screamers" for bombing practice. Blue Screamers were practice bombs made of light weight sheet metal and filled with sand to weigh about 100 pounds. A small black powder charge was placed in the nose to make it easier to observe and score hits on the desert target range. The air crews flew almost every day on some sort of practice mission and we were kept busy keeping all the guns and bombing gear in order.

In addition to our regular work periods, we also had drills, took calisthenics, did detail work and received overseas shots for typhus and cholera.

On 10 August our Armament Officer, Lt. Luhrs, called us together to tell us he had orders to start sending everyone on short furloughs, prior to our expected overseas duty. My name was on the first list of eight to go and I left for home the next day, via bus to Salt Lake City. There, on the morning of the 12th, I left for the east via the train. At first I was on a very nice air-conditioned car, The Challenger, but was later transferred to an old, dirty day coach. By the time I arrived in Chicago the morning of the 14th, I was so tired of the train that I went to the airport and caught a United Airlines DC-3 for Cleveland. There I bought a new set of khakis, as mine were filthy from the train. I went to my Aunt Esther's and really surprised her! I called home to let Mother and Dad know where I was and the next day they met us at Bedford, where I visited with my Uncle Purdy and Aunt Dora and my cousin Dick.

After visiting all my relatives in northern Ohio we drove home where our Fox Terrier, Jerry, was overjoyed to see me again. The short furlough passed swiftly. Mother outdid herself to make all my favorite meals and deserts and I went to visit relatives, high school teachers and other friends. We went on picnics and went fishing in Piedmont Lake, but all too soon it was time to return to duty. On 21 August Mother and I caught the train at Flushing for Cleveland, where we spent the night at Essie's. My plane left at 0245 the next morning and I had to catch the limousine to the airport about midnight. My flight route was via Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha and Cheyenne to Salt Lake City where I caught a bus for Wendover, arriving at 2030 on the 22nd. My Squadron had in the meantime moved to a new area and I had a long way to walk after drawing my gear from Supply.

I found that we were now working three shifts a day and as luck would have it I ended up on "C" shift - 2000 to 0800. Shortly after I returned, I developed a very painful spot on my chin and went on sick call on the 27th to have the Doc check it. He took one look and immediately assigned me to the hospital where they put me on sulfa-

thiozol tablets. They also gave me a series of three X-ray treatments for reasons I never understood. It was apparently a serious local infection, possibly caused by an ingrown hair or a shaving nick - the Doctor really didn't know for sure. For a few days it was so painful that I could hardly eat. After it started to drain it began to feel better but it was slow to heal - I was to be in the hospital for two weeks. While I was there I had to attend a "school", along with every other ambulatory patient. It was incredibly silly - one day they actually had a lecture on how to add numbers. Another Army fiasco which defied all logic and reason!

In early September I began to hear rumors that our Group was about to move to a new base. On the 6th and 7th I received day passes from the hospital to return to my Squadron to get my gear organized and partially packed. I was so glad to get out of that hospital that I actually volunteered to work on the line a few hours on the 7th. On 10 September I was released from the hospital and that same night we loaded some of our gear and equipment on trucks. The following day we loaded up the rest of our gear, changed to dress uniforms and entrained on Pullmans at 1945. Enroute each man was required to sign his Last Will and Testament - apparently the Army meant business!. We arrived at Fairmont, Nebraska at 1330 on 13 September, where a truck convoy took us to Fairmont Air Force Base, about six miles away. Upon arrival we drew bedding, a comforter and footlocker, were assigned to a barracks, and then some of us returned to the R.R. Station to load the remaining bags and equipment on trucks.

This base was brand new - we were the first Group to arrive for training and all the facilities were in fine shape. Our barracks were the usual wood-framed, tarpaper-covered single story structures, so clean and new that we did not have to go through the usual clean up and scrub down detail. On the line our Armament Section shared a hangar with the 727th Squadron but there was lots of room. We started off with two nine hour shifts and again I got the "B" shift, from 1600 to 0100. The work remained about the same for a while - loading guns, loading Blue Screamers, doing required hardware modifications, etc. I spent a lot of time reading technical orders (T.O.s) on the power turrets so that I could do my own turret work without having to turn it over to a power turret specialist. Before long I knew about all there was to know about servicing, repairing and adjusting turrets and gunsights. It was a lot more challenging than just working on machine guns. On the night shift we also had the job of painting the tips of the target ammunition different colors for each aircraft. This was so that after a gunnery mission, in which the gunners fired at a target sleeve towed by another plane, the gunners' scores could be tallied up more easily.

Increasingly, we also had the job of cleaning small arms, such as the Cal. 45 automatic pistols and Browning automatic shotguns, which were used on training ranges by the aircrews. And there were the inevitable lectures and training films on all sorts of subjects, primarily related to overseas duty. Our Squadron Commander, Captain Charles Haltom, spoke to us on several occasions.

Once every ten days or so we would receive a 24 hour pass. I usually spent my passes on the base getting caught up with personal things,

going to the Service Club and Base Theater, or just reading in the barracks. On two occasions, however, I did take a pass off base. On 20 September I hitched a ride into Lincoln where I went to a very nice U.S.O. and from there phoned home after waiting about three hours to get a line. I caught a bus back to the base, but for some reason it was very late and I had to wait five hours at the station. It finally left at 0300 and then dropped me off on the highway at a point from which I had to walk six miles to the base. I was afraid I might end up A.W.O.L. but I finally got to my barracks at 0700 and hit the sack. Two hours later I was awakened to fall out for a gas drill and a demonstration of incendiary grenades and smoke pots. Some pass!

Again on the 28th I took a pass, this time to Omaha via bus. I arrived in the late afternoon and was unable to get a line for a call home. Because of the shift I was on my pass was actually for about thirty hours, so I got a room in a pleasant downtown hotel for all of $ 2.00! It was a nice change to have a comfortable room all to myself without the constant noise and congestion of an Army barracks. I went to a couple movies and returned to the base the next morning by bus.

Winter was rapidly coming to Nebraska by the latter part of September and the nights were particularly cold and often windy. The wool blankets and heavy comforter felt good in our bunks. On the morning of 1 October I must have been covered over my ears because I never heard the whistle at reveille (the Air Force used whistles, not bugles) and I completely missed the early morning formation. I was, for the first time in the Army, properly chewed out by the First Sergeant. That evening the entire Squadron was confined to barracks for more overseas processing. We signed our Power of Attorney, were issued some new clothing and were supposed to have all our gear stenciled with our last name initial plus last four digits of our serial number for identification purposes. My stencil was E-2859, but I was unable to get it all done because I had to pull K.P. all night for being late that morning. I served on K.P. from 2000 to 0400. There was no heat in the mess hall that night and it was VERY cold. Afterwards I dove into my warm bunk at 0430 but was rousted out at 0800 to go to work on the line. I worked all that day on just three hours of sleep and got to bed at 2300 that night. Sure enough, the very next morning I once again overslept reveille and missed the first formation. That day I was in charge of the .45 pistol range in the morning and the skeet range in the afternoon, processing flight crews, who had to qualify on both ranges before going overseas. That evening, as punishment for oversleeping, I had to clean up the offices of the C.O. and the Sqdn. Adjutant, but that turned out to be a rather easy detail which I finished in about an hour. It was the last time I overslept reveille!

The armorers, because of their training, were responsible for operation of the pistol, skeet, sub-machine gun and carbine firing ranges on a rotation basis. For the next several days that was my assignment. It was not bad work and I had the opportunity to do a lot of firing myself. I had already qualified as Sharpshooter with pistol, rifle and Thompson sub-machine gun and as Expert with the carbine. The skeet range, however, got the better of me. Although it appeared easy, I never became a good shot at skeet, much to my dismay.

We also had a special skeet range where a Martin upper turret had been mounted with two Browning automatic shotguns installed for gunnery practice. That one was really tough - very few gunners fired well with that outfit. In general, I enjoyed working at the firing ranges, except for one bad experience. By the time most of the air crews had qualified on the pistol range I still had one first pilot who just couldn't make it. I had already flunked him at least five times and he was getting pretty upset about it. Finally, when he came within eight points of qualifying, he tried to "pull rank" on me by directing me to sign his papers. I bluntly refused to do so and I don't think he ever qualified before going overseas.

By the first week of October our Squadron had eight planes, of which two were what we called "flyaways". These were "H" model B-24s which would be our first actual combat aircraft. They had the new Emerson nose turrets installed, which were so new that we had not heard of or studied them in armament school. Thus I spent a lot of time learning all I could about this new equipment. Our first "H" model was 102, (we designated individual planes by the last three digits of their serial, or tail, numbers) which would later be named "Cannon Fodder" and was destined to crash on takeoff in Italy the following summer.

At this point in my narrative, a brief discussion of B-24 armament might prove of interest. This aircraft mounted ten Caliber 50 Browning machine guns, eight in power turrets and two in the waist which were manually operated, firing out of the open waist windows. The Emerson nose turret was electrically driven in azimuth and elevation by variable-speed D.C. motors. The guns were mounted side-by-side, charged (i.e. loaded) by hand with long levers and fired electrically by solenoids. There was an optical gun sight which projected a lighted circle with "bull's eye" on the target. The operator controlled the turret in azimuth and elevation with a hand-controller which also mounted the firing switch. As with all turrets, each gun had its own ammunition box in which the belted cartridges were stored in loops and fed to the gun through flexible chutes. Because of the weight of the ammunition each gun had a booster motor mounted near the breech which pulled the ammo belt from the chute and storage box. The ammo "belt" was formed of interlocking steel links. When the guns were fired the ejected cases and links were either jettisoned overboard or collected in special containers to be emptied later.

The upper turret was made by Martin and was electrically driven through amplidyne units. These were motor-driven D.C. generators which through special windings provided accurate control of the high output power via the low-current input signals from the turret controller. They emitted a high-pitched howl when in operation. The seat of the Martin turret was hinged and dropped down so that the gunner could pull himself up into position and then latch the seat under him. His feet rested in a special support. This turret was difficult to enter or leave, especially when one was wearing heavy winter flying clothing, parachute harness and flak vest. Since this turret could be moved a full 360 degrees in azimuth and more than 180 degrees in elevation, it incorporated special fire-interrupter cams which prevented the guns from firing into the props, wing tips and rudders.

The lower turret was a Sperry ball turret mounted on the underside of the plane just aft of the bomb bay. It was the same as the B-17 lower turret, except for a critical difference. Because the B-24 had a tricycle landing gear and thus sat very close to the ground, a rigid B-17 type of mount was not possible. Instead, the turret was designed to be retractable and thus was recessed almost completely into the fuselage. To lower it in flight one opened a valve in the hydraulic lift mechanism and the turret slowly lowered to its "fighting" position. To enter the turret then, one manually cranked it down in elevation until the guns pointed straight down - this rotated the door up so that the gunner could unlatch it and enter the turret. The procedure was reversed to exit the turret, then the gun barrels were manually rotated to a horizontal position and pointed directly aft and the turret was retracted into the ship using a manually-operated hydraulic pump. As a consequence, this turret was very difficult to service on the ground and it was quite impossible to test it by actual operation, except when the plane was in the air. In the air it was a comfortable turret to operate (the gunner was in a reclining position with his back resting against the door) but was rather confining. The turret was powered by a unique electric/hydraulic system. Constant-speed electric motors drove variable-displacement Vickers hydraulic pumps which, in turn, moved the turret by hydraulic controllers. Fortunately for those of us who had to service it, the Sperry Turret was the most reliable system on the plane.

The tail turret, where "Tail-end Charlie" resided, was made by Consolidated Vultee, the designer of the B-24. It incorporated a completely hydraulic power system, with a big hydraulic pump, pressure accumulator and associated plumbing and valves. When in operation it screamed like a banshee and tended to be less smooth in motion than the electrically-powered turrets. A leak or piece of flak in the right place would result in the entire rear of the plane being drenched in hydraulic fluid. The gunner was protected by sheets of armorplate on either side and a large rectangular piece of bullet-proof glass in front of him, which moved up and down in elevation with the guns. It was a lonely location to fly in combat.

As noted earlier, there were also two flexible guns mounted on pivots at either side of the waist of the plane, which were fired out of side windows. It was a very simple arrangement, with ring-and-post sights and gravity fed ammo belts. These guns spewed their spent shell cases and links all over the waist area when they were fired.

The B-24 bomb bay was located directly under the wing. There were two doors on each side which were of a unique "roller shutter" design. When opened on the ground or in the air for bombing, these doors just rolled up and retracted into the fuselage, rather than swinging open on hinges, as on the B-17. This resulted in far less air drag and buffeting in flight. The bomb bay was divided in the center by the main fuselage keel-beam, which also served as a catwalk for personnel access between the forward and tail sections of the plane. Two bomb racks were mounted fore and aft on each side on the bay, mounted to the keel-beam and the dorsal support beam. Each rack had five bomb-shackle positions, for a total of twenty possible bomb positions. All bombs were designed with two mounting lugs welded to the case

about two feet apart. A bomb shackle, which incorporated two large, rotating hooks, was attached to the two lugs on the bomb and, after hoisting the bomb and shackle into the bay the shackle was attached to two big snap-hooks on the rack at the proper position. The shackle had two operating levers at the top which fitted into separate release mechanisms on the bomb rack. One release unit was operated electrically by the intervalometer connected to the Norden bombsight. The second release mechanism was entirely mechanical in operation. All the mechanical releases were connected together through a linkage system to a "salvo" lever beside the Bombardier's position. When he pulled on this lever all the bombs in the bay were released simultaneously. The normal purpose of this "salvo" option was to permit the Bombardier to release his full bomb load in a "safe" (i.e. unarmed) condition in the case of an emergency, such as loss of an engine during takeoff. However, as we shall see, bombs were also frequently salvoed armed in combat. During normal bombing the Bombardier actually took over control of the aircraft, through the Norden bombsight, at the Initial Point (I.P.) and controlled altitude and direction until the analog computer in the bombsight released the bomb load at the Aim Point, (A.P.). The bombsight sent a signal to the intervalometer which then sent the actual "drop" signals to the releases on the bomb racks. The intervalometer was simply a box containing a relay for each bomb station, and a timer which was pre-set for a specified time interval between the release of each bomb. Bombs were dropped in a sequence (port-starboard & fore-aft) which would maintain the trim of the plane and, of course, bombs were released in a bottom-to-top sequence.

We worked very hard at Fairmont A.F.B. as the planes flew on training missions every day, weather permitting. There was, of course, the periodic guard duty, detail and K.P. which all enlisted men, under the rank of Sergeant, had to put up with. About the middle of October one plane from the Group (not our Squadron) exploded in mid-air for some unknownreason and all six aboard were killed. The weather continued to get worse - colder and with frequent rain. Our base, being new and without any grass cover, turned to a sea of mud, especially around the barracks and mess areas. We were constantly cleaning our boots, clothing and living quarters. It was particularly cold and miserable working on the line on night shift. We were issued wool caps and fleece-lined pants and jackets, which were very welcome.

Preparations for overseas duty continued. Each man was issued a steel helmet, firearm, dog-tag chain, cartridge belt and ammo clips. I was issued a Thompson sub-machine gun at first but quickly exchanged it for a carbine, because I didn't want to lug all that weight! We were given clothing check lists and from the heavy winter equipment we were being issued we thought it likely that we would be going to Britain. We had a number of physical fitness tests, including chinning, pushups and 300 yard dashes. At a "show-down inspection" in late October all of our gear was checked for proper size and condition. Anything that was even slightly worn was turned in for salvage and replaced with new like items. Dog tags, shot records and pay records were all carefully checked. We stood retreat in full equipment, with packs and steel helmets and there were lectures on personal security and censorship. Time was moving quickly.

The weather had become so bad that I no longer took a pass into town. In my spare time I went to the Base Theater, Service Club or P.X. I wrote at least one letter every day either home or to relatives. In return, Mother wrote to me every day, without fail. She also sent a package of either cupcakes or cookies once a week. I am sure I received more letters and packages than anyone else in my group. We had a Day Room where we could relax and read, and sometimes I played dime, nickel, quarter poker with the guys. Some played for much higher stakes, but I never did, nor did I ever play craps, which was probably the most popular gambling game.

By the end of October we had received all of our "flyaway" planes, fifteen in all. Whenever a new plane arrived it meant a great deal of work for the mechanics and armorers. Every gun had to be removed, cleaned, lubricated, checked for proper headspace and timing and then reinstalled. Turrets had to be thoroughly checked out, as well as the gunsights and bomb racks. In addition, some of the planes left the factory in very poor shape. We often found faulty circuits, missing parts, and systems which simply did not operate properly. Quality control was particularly poor on those planes which were constructed at the Ford River Rouge Plant, whereas planes manufactured by Consolidated and Douglas generally arrived in good shape. Auto manufacturers have never really understood quality control. Then there were the inevitable modifications which had not been incorporated at the factory and had to be done in the field. Every ship had to be carefully inspected to make sure all the latest Tech Orders had been complied with.

NOV.

The first week of December we had a real blizzard with heavy wind-blown snow and very cold temperatures. We drew sweaters, gloves, fleece-lined flying helmets and boots, coveralls and thick, wool Mackinaws from Air Force Technical Supply. The latter organization was set up to issue only special clothing for Air Force applications, whereas our regular uniforms and other equipment were issued by the normal Army Supply organization. From the latter we now received our overseas duffel bag to replace one of our barracks bags (we kept our second barracks bag for extra clothing which would be shipped as ship's cargo), three sets of new khakis, chapsticks, and weapon cleaning kits and oil.

I had asked Essie to try to locate a Kodak folding roll-film camera for me in Cleveland for use overseas, as I did not want to take my Argus, and thought I could obtain ordinary roll-film easier. I knew it would be hard to find one, as cameras were no longer being made during the War. Happily, on the fifth of November I received from her a Kodak Vigilant 620 with a roll of film and a Sunbeam electric shaver. I was really delighted with both. I took one roll of pictures during my last week at Fairmont A.F.B.

We had our final pre-overseas inspection on 16 November and on the 19th started packing our shop equipment, spare parts and guns for shipment. We also had to check all equipment aboard the planes to be certain that they were ready to go. All guns on the planes were given a heavy protective coating of oil. On the 19th also all passes were cancelled and we were restricted to Base.

On 20 November we went to the range and each fired 50 rounds from our new carbines to check them and sight them in. We received our last flyaway plane, a brand new "J" model on the 21st, but since all our equipment had been packed there was little we could do to check it out other than operate the turrets and oil the guns.

At this time, 21 November, we went to a standard one-shift day and most of our duty time was for lectures, drill and full-dress, full equipment formations. On the 24th we went on a seven mile hike with steel helmets and full field equipment, during which groups of six men practiced erecting pyramidal tents in a field.

The 25th of November was Thanksgiving and we received orders to be ready to move on short notice. I had waited till the last minute, almost, to send my radio home and now it was nearly too late. Our mail room was closed, so all I could do was to wrap it up and leave it with a lady who was a hostess in the E.M. Service Club. She promised to mail it for me the next day. We had a really fine Thanksgiving Dinner with turkey and all the usual side dishes. It was to be our last truly great meal for a long while. That evening we packed our musette bags and loaded a bunch of equipment on cargo trucks.

We finished packing the next morning, made up our horseshoe shaped blanket rolls (shades of 1918), scrubbed our barracks and policed our area. After a final roll call at 1500 we boarded trucks for the trip into Fairmont. There the local ladies, bless their hearts, came to the station and gave us coffee and home-made cakes and cookies. I will never forget that. This was not an organized or formal group, like the Red Cross or a service club, but just a bunch of local housewives trying to do their bit. We boarded our train - daycoaches - and left Fairmont, waving till those kind women passed from our view. During that night I had to stand guard over three prisoners from our Guard-house who would be going overseas under arrest for some infraction.

We changed to welcome Pullman cars in Chicago and I recorded that we had good meals, in spite of having a "cattle car" kitchen. Perhaps it was because by now I had become used to Army cooking! We passed through Columbus, Ohio the night of 27/28 Nov. and, assuming we were on the B & O track, we may well have passed right through Barnesville somewhat later. Late that evening we arrived at Camp Patrick Henry in Virginia and were assigned to barracks.

On 29 November we were issued new, light-weight gas masks, gas protective ointment, protective covers (simply a large plastic bag to put over oneself in the event of a mist-type gas attack), dust masks, eye shields and sulfa tablets for wounds. From the latter items I immediately decided we would be going to North Africa instead of England. It seemed logical - Naples had fallen to the Fifth Army on 1 October and that would make available the airfields of the Foggia area. We had more clothing checks, a censorship lecture, and a final opportunity to salvage items. We ate in a very large mess hall, using our mess kits, instead of the usual Army serving trays. Incredibly, early the next morning, at 0200, we were awakened in our barracks to sign the payroll!

On 30 November we were issued additional clothing, impregnated long underwear for protection against gas (by now I was sure the Army had some sort of phobia about poison gas), mosquito headnet, gloves and bar for sleeping, and four more ammunition clips. The mosquito equipment convinced me that we were headed for Italy, since malaria had always been a problem there. In moving around the camp we noted lots of Italian and German prisoners in the stockade, probably from North Africa. I wondered if they knew how lucky they were! That night I managed to get a call home to Mother and Dad to let them know we were about to leave. We packed our barracks "B" bags, which would go as ship's cargo, as well as our duffel bags, which we would carry, and made up our blanket rolls that night, expecting to leave the next morning. Instead, they rousted us out at 0400 to spend the next day, 1 December on K.P.! Good old Army!

On 2 December I gave my camera and two rolls of film to Lt. Luhrs to put in his "B" bag, as the enlisted men had been told they would not be able to take any cameras with them. Officers, naturally, were exempt from such silly rules. That day I was issued a second pair of G.I. glasses and a special pair of glasses to be used inside the gas mask. After lunch we were ordered to dress in boots, socks and overcoats, ONLY, (i.e. we had nothing at all on under our coats) and we were then marched to a large hall for our final physical examination. On the way we had a riotous experience. Our heavy G.I. overcoats came well below the knees but they had a slit up the back, almost to the waist, which was normally buttoned closed. I guess this was intended to be opened up for freedom of motion when needed. Our First Sergeant, whose name was Wright, was a big, tall and rather heavy man and he was leading our march to the examination building. As we went along we passed a number of WAACS and a couple Army nurses. When we passed them they started laughing and whistling. We couldn't figure out why at first, but noticed that they kept looking back over their shoulders at the head of our column. Then we saw! First Sergeant Wright's overcoat opening was completely unbuttoned and his coat was flapping open in the high wind. And, of course, his rear end was being exposed for all the world, including WAACS and nurses, to see and enjoy. He never knew and I doubt anyone ever told him! That night we had a final lecture on shipping details and an abandon ship drill.

On 3 December we were up at 0400 again, but this time not for K.P. After cleaning the barracks, we loaded our bags on trucks and then marched to the train station. There we received a lunch bag with two cookies, two sandwiches and an orange, and then boarded the train. After a trip of about 40 minutes, we arrived at Newport News and detrained onto a long pier. There Red Cross ladies gave us hot coffee and an Army Band was present to play us off.

Each of us was carrying our fully loaded musette bag, our large duffel bag, weapon, steel helmet and blanket roll, wrapped around the pack. We carried the duffel bags on one shoulder, which made for a high and rather unstable load. As we walked towards the gangplank one of the men in the front lost his balance on his way up the gangplank and almost fell into the water. He did drop his duffel bag into the water and was only saved by the quick action of a seaman who grabbed him as he almost went through the rope. That made all of us pretty nervous!

VOYAGE TO THE VWAR

We were now about to embark on our mission overseas, but what of the Group's aircraft? Actually, we in the ground crew had no knowledge at that time as to the whereabouts or routing of our planes, which we would not see again for almost seven weeks. The aircrews and planes started leaving Fairmont A.F.B. the last week of November, through the first week of December. Each plane crew was on its own - they did not fly in any sort of formation. The route they took was generally first to Miami, then down the Caribbean Island chain to South America. They then flew along the South American coast to Natal, Brazil, across the ocean to Dakar in French West Africa and finally to Constantine in Algeria. The Crew Chief for each plane flew with the air crew to provide service when needed. After they reached the field at Constantine they flew more practice missions from there until they finally joined us at our assigned base in Italy.

Our ship was a Liberty Ship constructed in April, named the S.S. JOHN S. PILLSBURY. She had two convoy trips and three enemy aircraft to her credit. The crew was Merchant Marine and there was a Navy gun crew aboard to man the armament which consisted of several 20mm anti-aircraft guns, a five-inch gun on the bow and a three-inch stern gun. The ship was 441 feet long and could carry a cargo of nearly 11,000 tons. Our ship had some deck cargo but most was in the holds.

We were assigned quarters in the No. 2 hold forward. An iron stairway led down into the hold, which was a large square area, clear in the center, with bunks lining all sides. These "bunks" were simply canvas slings mounted on a steel framework and were stacked six high to the ceiling. There could have been no more than about 18 inches between bunks and one had to climb up and swing one's body horizontally to get in. Of necessity, all of our gear was piled in the center of the hold. The floor consisted of removable hatches, under which cargo was loaded down to the ship's bottom. I cannot recall how many men were in one hold, but probably between 75 and 100. There was a rumor that we were sleeping over tons of ammunition, but no one really believed "they" would do that! We were to learn later that "they" would and did!.

There was only cold salt water for washing, and we had some "salt water soap", which was almost useless. The supply of fresh water for drinking was no problem. The officers, of course, couldn't mix with the enlisted men and the entire aft half of the ship was reserved for them. A large sign was placed in the companion way on each side of the bridge which said "Officers' Country" and we were not allowed beyond that point. No doubt they had comfortable quarters with hot water and probably ate in the ship's Officers' Mess.

Our ship left the dock at 1300 and moved out into Chesapeake Bay where we anchored. We were surrounded by scores of freighters and tankers that would be part of our convoy, which, we were told, would be the largest yet to cross the Atlantic. A Wasp-class carrier and two cruisers, one light, one heavy, moved slowly past us into open water. It was a fascinating and exciting experience for a nineteen year old kid! That night on the ship was my last in the U.S. for 18 months.

We remained at anchor in the Bay all day on 4 December. Most of us spent all of our time on deck, since the ventilation in the hold was so poor. I stood in line about an hour to get a couple candy bars at the small ship's P.X. We were served only two meals per day and they were not memorable. We finally weighed anchor at 2300, but did not move out into deep water until 0200 in the morning. It had been very foggy all day and we had seen little of the other ships.

We arose on 5 December to a sight I will never forget. There, spread out from left to right and as far back towards the horizon as I could see, was our convoy, mostly Liberties and oil tankers. Our ship was in the second row from the front and about in the middle, as far as I could tell. A navy blimp followed us out to sea for half the day, then left for land. Our escort consisted primarily of U.S. destroyers and light cruisers. We were joined in the afternoon by a number of Canadian corvettes, as well. These were so small by comparison with the larger warships and they bobbed about like corks and seemed to be always rolling, even in a mild swell. The sea this first day was choppy with a light swell and the sky was clear and blue. That night the gibbous moon turned the sea to silver and the ships beside us and to our stern loomed out clearly, though no lights showed. Occasionally we could see signal lights from escort vessels but there were no sounds other than the constant throbbing of our engines. It seemed an ideal night for a U-Boat skipper to earn his Knight's Cross!

I was one of the last group to be assigned to Hold # 2 and, as a consequence, I ended up on a top bunk, much to my disgust. However, as soon as we reached the open sea, with its constant swell, I was very glad to be on top! For within 24 hours probably more than three quarters of the men in the hold had become seasick, and many of them would remain sick for the entire voyage. When they got suddenly sick in their bunks it was the guys lower down who were "in the line of fire", so to speak. Being on top, I escaped that! However, the mess and smell in that hold was something I could never adequately describe. The efforts to clean up every day were largely in vain. After two or three days I took to sleeping on deck, in spite of the cold wind and spray. I found a spot between a couple packing crates of deck cargo and a ventilator where I could curl up in my blankets and overcoat and be fairly comfortable. To assure that I would not be washed away by a large wave, I had a piece of heavy hemp rope which I looped around my waist and then tied to a deck fitting. I also had a sharp knife to cut the rope just in case some U-Boat zeroed in on us! All this was quite against regulations, of course, but no one ever caught me.

On our second day out our Executive Officer, Major Marshall, told us we were going to Algeria and that the trip would take three weeks. Thus, my guess that we were going to Italy was correct, since we certainly wouldn't be operating against Germany from Algeria. That had to be simply the first stop. Late that afternoon we had a submarine alert. The entire convoy abruptly changed course and the Navy destroyers charged off to the south. One corvette almost disappeared in the waves. I was amazed at how quickly the destroyers turned, banking sharply as they went. So far as we could tell, nothing of any significance resulted from this alert.

Pearl Harbor Day dawned cold and windy with a very rough sea. Waves crashed over the foredeck and there was constant spray. I stood at the bow much of the day dodging waves in my raincoat and topcoat. The worst of the storm passed by evening and the sky was beautiful with a near-full moon. Even with the moon the sky was so dark that stars were very visible. The next two or three days were relatively calm with clear or only partly cloudy skies. During the day we were fascinated by the dolphins which played on our bow wake for hours on end. I remember being worried that the ship might hit one but the dolphins were far faster and more maneuverable than our plodding Liberty, which was probably doing about eight knots. I could never understand a lot of the guys who seemed to spend all their time in the hold playing blackjack or poker, without ever seeing what I thought so enjoyable.

By 10 December the small ship's P.X. was all sold out and on the same day someone stole my mess kit which I had kept on my bunk. Without the mess kit I could not eat and actually missed all my meals for the next day until a friend let me borrow his after he had eaten. The usual procedure in the Army in a case like that was to simply steal someone else's mess kit, but that was something I would never do.

The next two days continued very rough and windy. At nights I watched the moon come and go behind the rapidly moving storm clouds. The night of the twelfth some of us decided to investigate our hold after supper was over. We lifted a couple of the hatches and I, being smaller and lighter than the others, let myself be lowered onto the top of the pile of cargo. I had a small flashlight someone had located. All of the cartons and cases I could see at first contained canned foods and K & C field rations. There were cartons of canned pears and peaches and we passed one of each, along with some C rations, up to our area to be enjoyed for evening snacks. Most of us were getting rather tired of our kitchen chow. Thereafter, these evening "pantry raids" became a routine exercise and we had something different to eat almost every night! The evidence, in the form of cans and boxes, was cast overboard during the night. The following night I and another fellow made a different sort of discovery while we were searching around in the hold. Around the edges and under the mound of food boxes were what must have been hundreds of wooden crates filled with 75mm howitzer shells! We were quartered over a veritable ammunition dump!. We realized then that our lifeboat drills would be no help if a well-placed torpedo found its mark on the PILLSBURY.

We all had some natural concern about U-Boats even though ship losses in the North Atlantic were very much reduced by the end of 1943, over what they had been only eight or ten months earlier. What we did not realize at the time was that the Allies had essentially won the Battle of the Atlantic in May when Admiral Donitz recalled most of his submarines from the Atlantic because of high losses. Those great losses in the wolf-packs were the direct result of Britain's ability to read Donitz's Enigma-encoded messages to his ship's commanders. These facts, of course, I learned only long after the War from reading histories of those days.

On 14 December the Navy crew held some gunnery practice, test-firing the 20mm A.A. guns and the larger bow and stern guns. Very impressive!

Every clear night, during the period of the waning moon, I enjoyed sitting on deck watching the stars. At home Father and I had often sat in the yard to stargaze - he had taught me many of the constellations. I was especially impressed with the darkness of the sky and the consequent brilliance of the stars in the middle of the Atlantic. I noted in my journal that I observed many meteors on the night of the 14th. The following night I saw something even more dramatic - and ominous, as well. While sitting on the foredeck I suddenly heard the wail of a siren coming from an escort destroyer stationed in front of the convoy. I stood up to see what was going on and saw two destroyers charging off to the southwest at flank speed. Then way back on the horizon I could see a ruddy glow which increased steadily and reflected from the low-hanging clouds. At about the same time the entire convoy made a sharp turn to port. I watched the glow for some time, but it gradually faded as we moved away. I never learned exactly what happened that night - though, of course, I suspected that a ship in the rear of our convoy had been torpedoed. Several other fellows on deck saw the event also. The next morning I asked several of the merchant seamen about it, but they claimed to know nothing. A sailor from the Navy gun crew gave me the same response. We had noted earlier that the ship's crew was very close-mouthed and seldom discussed more than the weather with the G.I.s. I suspect that they were under instructions never to discuss convoy matters with their military passengers.

It continued to be windy, with a very rough sea. There was another gun practice on the 15th and on the 17th we had a submarine alert. That same day we were ordered to wear our steel helmets at all times while on deck, along with our life jackets, as usual. On the 18th I recorded that the water was unusually phosphorescent in the bow wake. On the 19th the convoy slowed its speed significantly and many of the ships shifted their relative positions. Ours ended up in the southernmost column some distance back from the leading row of ships. That afternoon I saw the first gulls wheeling over the ships and knew we were close to Africa. It was very dark and cold that night with the stars again brilliant - I searched the horizon for lights, in vain.

On the morning of 20 December there were many gulls in the air and at noon we first sighted a faint outline of mountains on the eastern horizon. Africa, at last!. It seemed that we moved very little all that day as the coast never appeared to get appreciably closer. We passed through the Strait of Gibraltar early in the morning of the 21st. I was on deck, as usual, and, peering into the darkness, I could see some scattered lights on the African side, but I could catch no glimpse of the rock itself. We sailed along the African coast all day and could see only mountain ranges which loomed dimly on the horizon. That night we anchored somewhere off-shore and could see what appeared to be lighted buoys near the coast.

On 22 December we remained anchored all day outside of the breakwater at Oran. It was a truly spectacular view - one which is still sharp and clear in my memory to this day. The Mediterranean Sea was a beautiful blue-green color with a frosting of whitecaps. The buildings of the city were a brilliant white against the blue sky. To the east of the city steep cliffs rose to what appeared to be a high escarp-

ment, while to the west rose a rather rugged and high mountain with some sort of building at the summit. A ship's rumor had it that we would not land at Oran, but would go on to Sicily.

However, on the morning of the 23rd we moved into the easternmost harbor of Oran and were berthed to a wharf by two tugs. There were several warships in the harbor, including a French battleship, three torpedoed ships in drydock and the beached half of a tanker. While waiting to leave the ship, we threw candy and cigarettes to natives who were working on coal barges nearby. About noon we disembarked and were taken by truck convoy through Oran to a staging area about 12 kilometers from the city. The ride through the city was something of a shock. Instead of the clean, bright and beautiful image it presented to us while anchored off-shore, the city was quite dirty and gave off an aroma which I could never adequately describe! It was fascinating, however, with crowds of people representing probably a score of nationalities and uniformed men from virtually every Allied nation and colonial outpost.

At our staging area we were assigned to large pyramidal tents on a hillside which overlooked a beautiful valley. There were Arabs wandering about everywhere, many of them herding goats. Ever after we referred to this rather miserable place as "Goat Hill". We were issued G.I. cots and two extra blankets. Since we already had two blankets per man, we could not understand the issue of extra blankets until later that night when the desert cold settled upon us. It was really frigid and we spent a miserable night - I recorded in my journal that I could have used six blankets! It rained all day on the 24th and the entire area turned into a sea of sticky mud. That night was a Christmas Eve to be remembered. We huddled around an open wood fire in our overcoats and raincoats, wet, cold and miserable, while we heated "C" ration stew and beans over the fire and sang Christmas carols. I am sure there wasn't a man there who didn't think of family and home, with a lump in his throat.

On Christmas we had no formations and a number of men went into a local village, St. Luis, to buy wine. Many of them were more used to beer than wine, with the result that there were a bunch of sick, drunk soldiers by evening. During the day we noticed a lot of Arabs wearing curious white robes. It turned out that these were G.I. muslin mattress covers which soldiers had sold to the Arabs for the equivalent of ten or fifteen dollars. The new owners cut arm and head holes in the covers and wore them like desert sheiks - it was a strange and wondrous sight! We had turkey for supper on Christmas, but it was not a great meal, as the cooks had to work over an open field kitchen in the rain and the food was soggy and cold by the time we got it. That night I had to serve on guard duty from 2000 to 2200 and from 0200 to 0400 the next morning, We had to watch the Arabs very closely, especially at night, as they would steal anything they could carry off. Fortunately, just pointing a carbine at them would send them scurrying off and there was never a need to fire at them. On 26 December we were told that we would depart on a three day voyage the following day - obviously to Italy, though we were not told our destination. We spent most of that day and evening packing our gear.

The morning of 27 December we were up at 0400, packed our blanket rolls and packs, turned in our extra blankets and cots and left on trucks at 1000. We again drove through Oran but this time we passed through a long tunnel in the mountain which rose immediately to the west of the city and entered the western part of the harbor which, it turned out, was operated by the British. We got off the trucks at a motor pool and had to walk about three kilometers to our ship. We passed by the French battleship Lorrain which, I remember, had curious gun mounts in the side of the hull, as well as in the usual deck turrets. One sight I still remember was of a French sailor walking along the wharf with a long loaf of French bread under each arm. The bread was not protected by any sort of wrapping and was probably fresh from some bakery.

Our new ship was a Dutchman, the "Johann DeWitt", a two-stacker of perhaps 12 to 15 thousand tons. She must have been a passenger liner on the Atlantic run before the war. We shared the ship with a group of Combat M.P.'s, some infantry troops and about half of the 449th Bomb Group. The ship was very crowded. Our group was assigned to hold E-5 where we would sleep in hammocks which were rolled up and stowed during the day to make more room. That evening we were detailed to carry our extra duffel bags and all the officers' bags from the dock, where they had been dumped, onto the ship, where we tossed them into a deep hold amidships.

We left our dock early on the 28th and anchored in the harbor until our convoy could form up. The convoy consisted only of four large troopships (all former liners), two of which were towing barrage balloons, and a fairly large escort of British destroyers and corvettes. There were no freighters or tankers in the group. We left Oran harbor about noon and sailed along the coast of Africa all day. As soon as I could I started exploring the DeWitt. She was very large, compared with the Pillsbury and even had a barbershop. The crew were all Dutch and Dutch money was used to pay for any services. I still have some Dutch coins from that trip! There was also a British Army contingent aboard the ship and we learned that they were there to prevent the Dutchmen from trying to run the ship into a port in the Netherlands in an attempt to rescue fellow citizens from the German occupation. The British, of course, did not want to take the chance of losing a valuable troopship as the result of some such desperate venture. During my exploration of the ship I accidentally walked into "Officer Country" and saw the luxurious cabin accommodations and the liveried Indian flunkies who were scurrying about waiting on our fellow soldiers of higher rank and more gentlemanly demeanor.

The meals on the DeWitt were fairly good, except that we had to get used to a lot of mutton and tea. We quickly discovered that the English crackers we were served were well populated with weevils and so we fed these to the Mediterranean fish.

On 29 December we passed Bizerte in the afternoon and then turned from the coast towards Sicily. During the late evening we passed Palermo and could see searchlights and tracer shells coursing across the sky, apparently in search of some German intruders. The following morning we were passing by coastal Italian islands and soon passed the Isle of

Capri and entered Naples harbor about noon, where we remained anchored all day. What a lovely view, in spite of the gray, misty day! The harbor was a crescent-shaped expanse of blue water with the city of Naples spread out in the center. Behind the city rose the great bulk of Vesuvius, its upper half almost totally obscured by clouds. That evening we stood on deck and watched the lights of the city, surprised that there was no blackout in effect.

Again on the 31st, we remained at anchor in the harbor all day. It was cold and raining with a strong chop in the harbor. We hauled our duffel bags from our hold onto the deck. In the evening we celebrated New Year's Eve with ginger beer from the ship's exchange. On New Year's Day the weather cleared and it was somewhat warmer. All of Mt. Vesuvius was visible, its peak covered with snow, and a curling plume of smoke drifted off with the breeze. The volcano, the city and the bay spread out before us was a glorious vision - just like the travel posters. The delay in landing, we were told, was caused by a fouled anchor chain. During the day numerous small boats, each with several people aboard, were rowed out to our ship for the purpose of begging food and cigarettes. We could see in the distance that there were at least a dozen ships sunk in the harbor near the wharf area.

After lunch on 2 January the ship weighed anchor and moved towards the dock area. Our "dock" turned out to be a ship which had been sunk and was lying on her side near the wharf. Across the ship's hull the engineers had constructed a temporary gangway to the wharf. The entire wharf area was littered with the wreckage of war and many buildings nearby were in ruins from bombings. Since the ship could not lower a gangplank we disembarked via large cargo nets over the side. It was a bit tricky with full packs, helmets and weapons. We moved to the wharf area where we left our personal gear under armed guard, then returned to the ship to unload all of our duffel and barracks bags and our TAT (To Accompany Troops) equipment.

We worked until 0100 unloading baggage and equipment. A small winch was used to remove the equipment from the hold, after which it was loaded into a large cargo net, then lowered via ship's crane to a lighter or barge that was tied alongside the ship. It was during this operation that we managed to get a bit of soldiers' revenge against a few of our officers who were particularly obnoxious. When we saw a piece of baggage which belonged to one of these fellows, we simply heaved it over the side without benefit of the cargo net. They made an awesome sound as they crashed onto the deck of the lighter! The guys on the lighter reported that after several such impacts they detected the distinctive aroma of whiskey. The breakage of those illegal bottles must have imparted a heady scent to several fancy dress uniforms! Naturally, I made certain that Lt. Luhrs' bags, one of which contained my camera, were carefully lowered via cargo net. We enjoyed a peaceful sleep aboard the DeWitt that night.

Early on 3 January we started to load all of our gear and equipment on trucks. I was assigned as a guard on one of the first trucks to leave, while the other fellows remained on the wharf to continue loading. We drove through Naples, past many bombed-out buildings, to a former orphanage in the town of Bagnoli, north of Naples.

This complex consisted of several buildings, most of which were heavily camouflaged with elaborate paintings of natural scenes, such as woods, fields, etc. It was probably done by the Italians, rather than the Germans, both of whom had used the buildings before the Allies captured Naples. The buildings were bare concrete inside, cold and damp, and not at all inviting as a place to live. The latrine was the most incredible facility I had ever seen. It was a completely barren room, long and narrow, with no fixtures of any sort. Running the full length of each wall was a tiled gutter, or channel, perhaps 18 inches wide and two-and-one-half to three feet deep. A stream of water flowed along the bottom of each channel. I assume it went directly out into the sea without any treatment. I could not but think how easy it would be to lose one's balance and fall in! Outside the building were a number of tiled sinks for washing in cold water.

Fortunately, as it turned out, we did not have to spend even a single night at this facility. After we had unloaded all of our trucks, we were told that we would be moving out that same night. More trucks arrived in the afternoon and we started reloading. We were interrupted once by an air raid alert. After supper we were issued additional ammunition and at 2300 we loaded into the trucks and the convoy started off. It was a dark, rainy and very cold night. We drove in an easterly direction on back roads, using only the blackout lights on the trucks. These were almost invisible little blue slits of light which were located in the tail and parking lights of each truck.

No more than an hour after we had left it became apparent that our truck was weaving about the road more than was justified by the terrain. Sure enough, at the first rest stop we found that our motor pool driver had already finished one bottle of wine and was working on the second. The officer in charge of our truck immediately put him under arrest and asked if any of us could drive the truck. It turned out that I was the only one who had driven one of those large 6 x 6 cargo trucks, so I got the job.

It was a miserable night. With the rain and blackout conditions it was next to impossible to see beyond the vehicle in front. In addition, the roads became extremely bad. We were driving somewhere just behind the front of the Fifth and Eighth Armies, as I could hear artillery in the distance and see occasional flashes against the mountains. The roads in places were so muddy and soft that we had to use low range and all-wheel drive. There was bomb or shell damage in many places and the repair work had been hasty. We crossed a couple mountain ranges and the road in places was nothing more than a trail. Once the lead driver must have departed from our planned route and we were redirected by the combat Military Police. I not only did not know the route but I did not even know our destination, so I didn't dare lose sight of the truck ahead.

We drove all day, 4 January, through rather picturesque farming country. Some of the towns we passed through had been badly bombed and shelled. All were poor and shabby and had the same depressing appearance. For meals we ate cold C and K rations along the way at rest stops. About noon we passed through Foggia where we picked up new drivers. Finally at midnight, after being on the road over 24 hours,

we reached our destination, a little crossroads town called Gioia del Colle. Its location is at the very upper part of the "heel" of Italy's "boot", almost due south of the port city of Bari. It was cold and raining hard when we arrived. In the darkness we had no idea where we were except that we could see that we were parked in a sea of deep mud. We had no choice but to get what sleep we could sitting up in the trucks.

It was still raining the next morning - one of the coldest, wettest and most dreary days I have ever known. Our kitchen equipment had become lost in the move and we had to eat with the 724th Squadron, all of us sweating out the very long chow lines. We found we were located at a former Italian, and later German, airfield which was now being used by an R.A.F. Hurricane fighter squadron. In the afternoon we started to set up our tents on a very muddy slope. It was an impossible situation. Our tent pegs were missing and we had no hand tools at all. Our Executive Officer, Maj. Marshall, took one look at the mess we were in and told us to wait while he scouted for a better tent area in a Jeep. It was just about dark when he returned and led us to a far better site. He had found a former German barracks area where there were three dilapidated wood buildings, some stone huts and several unfinished stone barracks. Though there were no windows in the wood buildings and no roofs on the stone barracks, all had stone floors and the place looked like the Waldorf to us! Maj. Marshall was a stern and gruff officer but he did his best to take care of his troops. Searching for this tent site caused us all to miss supper that night and we went to sleep hungry and in the rain, lying on the stone floors of the old barracks, sheltered only by our raincoats. For some reason the Army never issued ponchos to troops in World War II, and a simple rain coat wasn't much help under such conditions. But at least we weren't sleeping in the mud, as were the Fifth and Eighth Army troops at the front.

For the next three days we all worked on squadron details getting equipment unloaded, setting up a mess tent (though our kitchen equipment was still missing), and an orderly room tent and other necessary chores. It was difficult, cold and muddy work, but no one complained, as we had to get our camp area set up and organized. In our spare time we started to set up our living tents inside of the unfinished stone barracks. We were still sleeping on the ground in the open.

On Sunday, 9 January, our Armament Section had to pull 24 hour guard duty, but we managed to move into the three tents we had set up that evening. There were nine men to a tent. On the 10th we finished the mess tent and began to spread gravel around the area to make walk-ways through the mud. We had supper in our own mess that night. It got dark at 1800 and since we had no lights at all there was nothing much to do in the evening except crawl into our tents, out of the weather.

The weather cleared on the 11th and we got one more tent set up so we would be less crowded. Maj. Marshall flew to Algiers that day to confer with our Group Commander, Col. Eaton. It continued very cold, with nighttime temperatures in the 20's.

I recorded 13 January as a Red Letter Day in my journal. Our P.X. was opened, we were issued straw for our mattress covers to make the ground feel a bit better, I was paid 4577 Lira in invasion currency (the exchange was one lira = one cent), and finally at our first mail call, I received 29 letters and four packages, one of which contained two rolls of film. That evening I went to a movie at the Service Club in Gioia.

On the 14th I was on guard duty in the morning. We were told that we had to be all ready for arrival of the air echelon within 48 hours. All of us were on some sort of squadron duty doing our best to get the camp and line areas in order. I was on a crew that had to construct the latrine. We dug a pit three feet square at the top, five feet square at the bottom and about ten feet deep. Over it we constructed a rather substantial "two-holer" structure with the usual half-moon cutout in the door. Wiring was strung to all the tents but as yet our portable generator had not been located among all the unopened crates.

The weather continued to be terrible. We had rain, snow and sleet all intermixed from day to day and the mud was beyond description. It turned out that the winter of 43/44 was the worst in Italy in over forty years, and it was particularly bitter for the troops at the front, fighting over some of the most difficult terrain in Europe. At first the only warmth we had was from open wood fires made from the packing crates in which our equipment was shipped. That soon ran out and there was no other wood available anywhere near our field. I don't know who came up with the idea, but sometime during our stay at Gioia del Colle we began to construct stoves for our tents which burned not wood but 100 octane aviation gasoline! We took 50 gallon oil drums and cut them in half with a torch. A circular hole was then cut in the closed end for a stove pipe which was cobbled together from pieces of scrap aluminum and food cans. The pipe extended through an opening in the top of the tent. The burner was made of a piece of ordinary one-inch iron pipe, about eight inches long, one end of which was hammered and welded closed. A long copper tube, brazed to the other end of the burner, was run outside the tent where it was brazed to a smaller steel drum mounted on a wood support, which served as the fuel tank. A shut-off petcock was installed in the fuel line and five or six very tiny holes were then drilled through the burner tube on the top side. To operate the stove a small amount of fuel was allowed to run into the stove where it was ignited to pre-heat the burner. This was the critical time - if too much fuel ran in we risked a mini-explosion, not to mention the possibility of burning a tent down, which did happen on a couple occasions. If the priming fuel was insufficient the burner would not be heated enough to vaporize the fuel and the entire operation had to be repeated. After pre-heating the burner, the valve was just cracked open to allow a small flow of gasoline. The hot iron burner pipe vaporized the incoming fuel and a hot, pale blue flame was emitted from each of the small holes in the burner, much like a Coleman camp stove. When these improvised stoves were made and operated properly, they really worked beautifully and kept the tents cozy warm during those bitter winter evenings. We never operated them during the night, for safety reasons.

Strangely, the Air Force never offered any objection to the use of these unauthorized, non-G.I. stoves or to the use of the thousands of

gallons of high test aviation fuel which must have been consumed in them over a two-year period. And, of course, every drop of this fuel had to be transported across the Atlantic by tankers, with the ever-present risk to ships and lives. In those days most Americans seemed to think that we had access to an infinite supply of all natural resources.

Another example of the profligate use of gasoline by Americans was in the washing of planes which I observed at Gioia. All aircraft engines used in World War II tended to spew out varying amounts of oil during flight. Some of this oil naturally ended up on the wings and fuselage and, in time, would build up a heavy residue which posed a potential fire hazard when an engine backfired. Thus, it was necessary to clean this oil residue off the plane surfaces on a regular basis. When the British and New Zealand ground crews cleaned their Hurricane fighters they got a small quantity of 80 octane vehicle gasoline - NOT 100 octane aviation fuel - in a can and washed their planes down by hand with a rag. However, when our mechanics washed down B-24's they simply drew bucketfuls of 100 octane fuel from drainage petcocks on the plane and literally sloshed it on the plane with smaller cans. It was not only extremely wasteful but didn't even clean as well as the method of our British cousins, who had not been reared in a land of plenty.

On Sunday the 16th there was a U.S.O. show in a hangar at the field. In general, we had only second or third rate U.S.O. shows in Italy - we never saw any first line entertainers such as Bob Hope, or other Hollywood luminaries. Usually we had shows put on by a bunch of vaudeville has-beens. But this show was different and I shall always remember it as the night Ella Logan sang to us. She sang her heart out on a makeshift stage with a small band, wearing a pretty summer dress to boost our spirits. But as she sang we could all see that she was shivering in the sub-freezing temperature. Finally one of the fellows up front dashed up on the stage and put his fleece lined leather jacket around her. Then, between numbers, one of our cooks ran out and brought back a hot cup of tea for her. Before her next song we saw her dab away tears from her face. It was a memorable evening.

On 18 January I and a buddy, Bob Keup, had a pass and went into Bari, hitching rides on British trucks. We went to the P.X. and Red Cross Service Club where we got a shave, haircut and shampoo for 35 cents. What a luxury! We had hoped they might have a shower, as none of us had had a bath of any sort since 3 December, but no luck. This large port city was in a sorry state; shabby, smelly, people in rags and not a thing for sale in any of the shops except for cheap red wine. We met and walked around with a soldier from New Zealand who had fought with the Eighth Army across North Africa and had been away from his home for nearly three years. He had only more fighting to look forward to in Italy, with no end in sight.

Squadron detail work continued on the 19th and on the 20th we welcomed our planes - all 62 of them - which arrived from Algeria. Now, at last, we could begin to do the work for which we had been trained. Work which would be hard and deadly, both for our people and for the soldiers and civilians who would suffer under our forthcoming attacks.

After our planes arrived we had a major task to check and inspect all the airborne armament. All guns had to be removed and cleaned, and each turret and all bomb racks had to be thoroughly checked. This work took several days. The weather continued to be bitter cold and damp - at night we shivered, even with four wool blankets. Except for the brief periods when we could huddle around our stoves in the evening, we were always cold. That winter of '44 was the worst time I have known. Pulling guard duty at night was especially bad, for we had only regular Army issue clothing - we had none of the special Air Force cold weather jackets, pants, boots and helmets which had been so welcome at Fairmont A.F.B.

When our air crews arrived we learned of the amazing exploit of one of our planes, No. 636. Over ~~mid Ocean, between South America and Africa~~ the Caribbean Sea - Windward Islands, she lost first one, then two and, finally, three of her engines. Only the number three engine was still functioning. To lighten the load, the pilot, Lt. Winski, ordered his crew to throw overboard everything that could be tossed out the open hatches. First went all the machine guns and ammunition which could be easily removed, then bomb shackles and hoists went out, along with other loose equipment. Finally all the crew members' personal luggage was tossed out. It was a desperate measure, but it saved the ship. Winski managed to land her at an emergency field on ~~Ascension~~ St. Lucia Island on one engine, a feat which no one believed a B-24 could accomplish. When 636 arrived at Gioia we had to almost completely re-fit her. Winski was immediately promoted to Captain by our Group Commander for his remarkable achievement. The plane was later named, "Three Feathers" and a pretty, naked gal, holding three appropriately positioned feathers, was painted on her nose.

On the 22nd we saw our first fatal accident at the field, though it was not one of our planes. A C-47 cargo plane was landing with a load of equipment when, for some reason, it ground-looped, flipped over and burned. None of the crew was able to get out. The field at Gioia, as noted earlier, had been built as a fighter strip by the Italians. It was never intended for use by heavy bombers. We were assigned there only temporarily, until the engineers could complete our permanent base near Foggia. The runway had been lengthened for use by our bombers and steel matting had been put over the unpaved runway to better distribute the weight of the B-24's.

While working on our planes on the line, some of us got to know a few of the R.A.F. ground crews. I became good friends with the crew of a Hurricane which was parked fairly close to our squadron. The mechanic was from Birmingham and the armorer was from Wellington, New Zealand. When I had a little spare time I sometimes helped clean the machine guns in the Hurricane - she carried an incredible six Cal. .303 guns in each wing. The plane's mechanic was fascinated by a pair of "water pump" pliers I had, which he had never seen before, so I gave the tool to him as a gift and drew another from supply.

On the 25th an old "D" model B-24, with 59 missions to her credit, was transferred to our squadron from another Group. She was named "Tangerine" and we spent about three days trying to get her back into

"fighting trim". A week or so later she was transferred back out of the Squadron! We also had to complete a variety of modifications to our planes which had been directed since we left Fairmont.

On the 28th I came down with a fever and chills - another bout with some sort of Army "bug". I was very sick the following day and that night we received our first orders to load live bombs. I was feeling too ill to help out and I felt terrible about it.

Our Group's first combat mission was flown on 30 January. We were, of course, in the 15th Air Force and were assigned to the 49th Wing, along with two other B-24 Groups, the 461st and the 484th. This first mission was the usual "Milk Run" (an easy mission) which was assigned to inexperienced new Bomb Groups. There was no flak and no fighter opposition, but even so we missed the target, a radar station in Albania.

I felt very bad for over a week and again had some pain in my ear, but I remained on duty after the first couple days. We loaded 500 pound demolition (demo) bombs again the night of 1 February for a mission against another Albanian radar station on the second. That day there WAS flak and a number of planes came back with damage. One plane of the 724th Squadron crash-landed with a blown tire and one engine out because of flak. This was our first real introduction to the realities of war.

I have previously described (pages ~~30~~ 32, ~~31~~ 33) B-24 bomb racks and the method of mounting bombs, so it might be useful at this point to describe the mechanics of loading bombs and to identify the types of bombs we used. We had a curious organizational structure with respect to handling of bombs and ammunition. Each Bomb Squadron had assigned to it three or four Ordnance men. These soldiers were actually in the Army Ordnance Corps, assigned to the Air Force. On their uniforms they wore the Ordnance Corps insignia (irreverently referred to as the "Flaming Piss-pot"), rather than the Air Force insignia. (Likewise, we also had two men assigned to each squadron from the Army Chemical Corps, to serve as gas-protection specialists.) Ordnance was responsible for the transportation of bombs and ammunition from ports like Naples and Bari, where it arrived via cargo vessels, to bomb dumps located near each bomber base. When orders were received for certain bombs to be loaded, the Ordnance people, who operated the bomb dumps, would load the appropriate bombs on special bomb trailers and haul them to the airfield where they unloaded the required number beside each aircraft. At that point we armorers took over and loaded the bombs into the planes. After loading, the Ordnance people would return to mount the steel fins on the larger demolition bombs and to install the fuzes in each bomb. The fins had to be installed after loading to prevent damage from handling. Ordnance was also responsible for installing the arming wires on the fuzes, but we often helped with that job.

Most of the larger general purpose demolition bombs had a fuze installed in both the nose and the tail, where there were threaded recesses to receive them. Smaller incendiary and fragmentation bombs usually carried only one fuze. The small 25 pound anti-personnel frag-

mentation bombs, which were mounted in clusters of six, were shipped in wood boxes, with the fuzes already installed. We hated to load fragmentation bombs because they were so awkward and hard to handle, but we loved the cases they came in as we used the wood to construct floors for our tents.

The fuze (yes, it is properly spelled with a "z"!) contained a very sensitive explosive train which actually detonated the T.N.T. in the bomb. Each fuze was normally in a "safe" condition. It had a small propeller at the end which was locked into position with a removable safety pin much like a cotter pin. In flight, on the way to the target, the Bombardier had to remove this pin from each bomb fuze and bring them back so that the armorer could verify that all arming pins had been removed. After the bomb was dropped, air flow would rotate the propellers rapidly and after a set number of revolutions the fuze would be "armed" and ready to explode the bomb on contact. Some fuzes could be adjusted for a predetermined time delay so that, for example, a bomb would not explode when it hit a factory roof, but a brief time later after it was inside the building. Sometimes we used fuzes with very long time delays, of perhaps several hours. These we called "booby-trap" fuzes as they caused a buried bomb to explode under the earth long after it landed. In addition, these fuzes had another nasty feature. Two ball-bearings rode in tapered tracks on opposite sides of the fuze. As it was screwed into the bomb these balls recessed into the deep part of the track, causing no interference. But when anyone tried to disarm the bomb by removing the fuze, the balls would jam against the threads, penetrate the thin wall of the fuze and instantly detonate the bomb. Even we could not remove these things and when a plane had to abort a mission and return with unused bombs they were usually dropped "safe" into the Adriatic Sea. It was just too dangerous to try to unload them on the ground for re-use, with those fuzes installed.

Since, after the Bombardier had removed the arming pins in flight, air flowing through the bomb bay might cause the fuze propellers to rotate and arm the bombs inside the plane, a second safety device, called an arming wire, was used. This was a long brass wire with a ring in the center. The two ends of the wire were inserted through the two fuze propellers to prevent their rotation and the center ring was attached to a special spring-loaded snap on the bomb shackle. When the bomb was released through the bombsight this retainer snap would be locked closed thus captivating the arming wire, which pulled out of the fuzes as the bomb dropped and remained attached to the shackle. Normally, when bombs were "salvoed" mechanically, the retainer snap was NOT locked and the arming wire ring would pull out of the shackle and fall with the bomb, thus preventing the fuzes from arming during free fall. In practice, because there were many missions, especially later in '44 when it was desired to drop armed bombs in "salvo", we often hooked the ring of the arming wire over one of the shackle arms so that there was no way any bomb could fall in a "safe" condition.

During our first several weeks of combat missions we loaded bombs in the standard approved manner. Two hand-operated winches, which had a long steel cable with a hook on the end wound around the drum, were mounted on the inside of the bomb rack to be loaded. The bomb, say a

500 pounder, was rolled under the bomb bay by hand and positioned under the rack. A heavy-duty double web sling, with attach points at each end was positioned under the bomb. Next, the winch cables were rigged through pulleys and the hooks were connected to the bomb sling. Then two men, one on each winch, would slowly crank the bomb to the proper place on the rack, starting at the top, while a third man guided the bomb up and finally connected the shackle into the large snaps on the rack. When the first rack was loaded the winches had to be removed and re-positioned on the next rack. A B-24 could carry a total of twelve 500 pound bombs and it would take three men at least 75 to 90 minutes to load one plane. Crews often had to load four planes in a night, so the work went on until the wee hours of the morning. Later on we came up with a much easier loading method, which I will describe later. It was contrary to all standing tech orders but it was so much simpler that one man, if necessary, could load a plane all by himself, in less time than three men using the approved loading method.

Smaller bombs, such as the 100 pound incendiaries and demo bombs and the fragmentation bomb clusters (frags) were loaded by hand by two men without the winches. These smaller bombs were loaded five to a rack - a total of twenty per plane. Later on, by using some special cables we devised, we were able to double our loads of incendiary and fragmentation bombs. The 250 and 300 pound demolition bombs were loaded at the same positions as the 500 pounders, i.e. twelve per plane. While we winched the upper one up, we often tried to speed the work by manually lifting the two lower 250 pound bombs into position. In retrospect, this was a stupid thing to do, as someone could have been badly injured if one of those bombs had dropped. As it was, three of us developed hernias and I suffered with mine until 1969, when I finally submitted to surgery. The 1000 pound bombs were loaded two to a bay - a total of eight per plane and for 2000 pound bombs we had to install special, auxiliary racks in each bomb bay, each of which held only one bomb, for a maximum load of four bombs.

All of the above were maximum loads. For long missions deep into Germany our planes often carried smaller loads, such as ten 500 pounders, six 1000 pounders and three 2000 pounders. By far the bomb we most frequently used was the 500 pound G.P. demolition bomb. The following is a list of all the bombs I can recall that we used:

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  25 # anti-personnel fragmentation - six per cluster - 40 clusters
 100 # fragmentation (used against parked A.C.) - 40 per load
 100 # G.P. demolition - up to 40 per load
 100 # incendiary - up to 40 per load
 250 # G.P. demolition - 12 per load
 300 # G.P. demolition - 12 per load
 500 # G.P. demolition - 12 per load
1000 # G.P. demolition -  8 per load
1000 # Armor-piercing demolition (used against sub pens)- 8 per load
2000 # G.P. demolition -  4 per load
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When A.F. Headquarters called the Bomb Groups to give the orders for the next day's bomb load, they used code words for each bomb. I can recall only that the frag clusters were "Lightnings", 500 pounders

were "Liberators" and 2000 pounders were "Thunderbolts". All other bombs were also given aircraft names as code words.

Overall during our service in the 15th Air Force, the 451st Bomb Group flew 245 combat missions, the first on 30 January 1944 and the last on 26 April 1945. We bombed targets in Italy, France, Albania, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. Most of our missions were against strategic targets, such as aircraft factories, submarine pens, ball-bearing factories, oil refineries, airdromes and marshalling yards. We also bombed lesser targets such as bridges, radar stations, highways and front line targets in support of troop operations. It would be tedious to go over these one-by-one in this history, thus it is my intent to describe what I regard as the most significant of our operations and those events which were of direct personal interest. As an attachment to this record I have included a copy of our Group's complete mission history, as compiled from official Air Force records by our Bomb Group Association.

We were grounded for the period 4 - 7 February because of extremely poor weather conditions. Generally, it was cold, rainy and windy and on the 6th we had several inches of wet snow on the ground. Our first real blooding in combat occurred on 8 February when we bombed a steel mill and marshalling yards at Piombino, Italy. During take-off one of our squadron planes, "Old Tub", # 151, after appearing to lift off normally, and with her wheels already retracting, began to lose altitude, as though from a loss of power. She crashed with full bomb load about five miles beyond the runway. Of the ten crew members aboard, only three survived, one very seriously injured. One of the gunners was found walking around in total shock about a mile from the crash site. Most of us who were at the runway got into the nearest trucks, weapons carriers and jeeps to drive to the crash to offer whatever help we could. There was little to do - the wreckage was a roaring inferno, as the entire load of fuel and two bombs exploded. After the heat subsided the medics came in to recover whatever remained of the bodies of the crew. The rest of us worked around the wreckage to pick up any re-usable items of equipment or personal items we could find. I still recall picking up someone's fleece-lined flying boot, which seemed strangely heavy, and discovering to my horror that it still contained a human foot.

Yet there was more to come that day. The Group was subjected to heavy flak at the target and many planes were damaged. As we stood near the runway watching the planes return, we saw a red flare fired from Capt. Winski's plane - a signal that there were wounded aboard. His plane was given landing priority and as he swung into his final approach we could see that the entire upper front of the plane, including the windshield and upper turret dome, was red, as though covered with hydraulic fluid. Instinctively, we realized that there was no hydraulic system in that area and before the wheels touched the runway I am sure most of us realized that we were looking at blood, not hydraulic fluid.

Winski's nose gunner had taken a piece of flak directly in the head and had been entirely decapitated. We were to work all night under floodlights repairing the damage and cleaning up the turret. It was

the most gruesome task of my life. After the medics removed the gunner's body we had to replace the damaged turret dome and clean up the mess, as best we could. Cleaning the upper part of the fuselage was easy, compared with cleaning the turret itself. There were bits and pieces of blasted bone and flesh in every recess and crevice. We were provided with some sort of disinfectant to help with the cleaning but the smell of that, combined with the odor of the blood and flesh under the warm lights was sickening. Two men vomited during the long night and I came very close to doing so. For days afterwards, the new gunner who inherited that turret complained of the lingering odor.

On 9 February we received a new plane, # 429, with only 85 hours on her, to replace "Old Tub". The following night we had our first experience with loading "Lightnings", the anti-personnel fragmentation bombs which were mounted six to a cluster. Each bomb came with fuze and fins already mounted and the cluster weighed over 150 pounds. We loaded these by hand, with a man on each end to lift. They were awful things to handle because there was no good handhold and sharp pieces of metal stuck out everywhere. Cut fingers and ripped clothing usually went with loading them, and even our gloves, when we finally got some, were usually short-lived. The frags were for troop support missions to the Anzio beachhead, which were aborted because of bad weather.

On the afternoon of the 14th a truck ran into the nose guns on # 111, "Old Taylor", and bent them badly. Two of us spent all night replacing those guns. They were so badly bent that we had to saw off the barrels in order to remove the guns from the turret. It was bitter cold on the line that night and we wished we had the warm fleece-lined clothing that we had at Fairmont A.F.B.

On the 18th we had more snow and the mud around the field and tent areas seemed almost bottomless. Our planes were grounded for several days because of the weather. During this period I was still receiving Christmas packages from home - one with cookies in it was so badly crushed that only crumbs remained. On the 21st I had a pass and hitchhiked into Bari where I went to a movie in a British theater and also spent some time at a British service club, which, as I recall, was called the Campbell Club. It was a strange fact that while American soldiers were always welcome at British facilities in Italy, the American Red Cross did not allow British or Colonial troops to use their facilities. This sort of blatant discrimination began to sour me on the Red Cross and the feeling increased over the months and remains with me to this day.

Early on the morning of the 23rd a stove exploded in our Group H.Q. building and burned the wood structure to the ground - it was a spectacular blaze. On the following day our Squadron had finally managed to set up a make-shift shower, with semi-warm water which flowed by gravity from a couple 55 gallon drums mounted on a wood platform. It wasn't much, and we had to wait in a long line, but I managed to get my first shower since 3 December and it really felt great!

After seven relatively easy missions to targets in Albania and Italy, we flew our first mission to Germany on 22 February - an aircraft factory near Regensburg. An attack on another ME-109 factory near Steyr, Austria followed the next day. Then on 25 February we flew a memorable mission. Our target was the same ME-109 aircraft factory at Regensburg which we had bombed, not too well, on the 22nd. Our Group led the attack with 40 aircraft. They flew to the target without fighter escort, since we then had no fighters with the necessary range. Enroute they were attacked almost continuously by some 200 Luftwaffe ME-109's and there was intense anti-aircraft fire from batteries near the target. During the aerial battle our gunners shot down 16 German fighters but we lost six B-24's. Our bombs were accurately placed on the target, in spite of the opposition, with severe damage to the facility. Because many of the planes were damaged or had injured crewmen and because most were low on fuel when they returned, almost all of our planes landed at fields near Foggia. Only three returned to Gioia that evening. Our Squadron lost one plane, Lt. Coleman's "Hard To Get", # 738. This raid was part of what came to be known as the "Big Week" in the air offensive against Germany. Though we did not know it at the time, this was to be our last mission from that airfield. But it was also one of our finest - for this Regensburg mission our Group received its first Presidential Unit Citation, which entitled all personnel to wear the Distinguished Unit Citation, a gold rimmed badge with blue field, on the right breast of our uniforms. Before the war was over we were to receive two additional such citations - we were the only Heavy Bombardment Group to be awarded three Distinguished Unit Citations during the entire war!

It had been obvious for some time that our heavy bombers could not continue to operate from the field at Gioia del Colle. Their weight had forced the steel matting into the mud and landings had become hazardous. When our loaded B-24's took off they threw out "rooster tails" of mud and water, much like a racing hydroplane. Our planes returned to the field from Foggia on the 28th but thereafter the runway was closed to all but the R.A.F. Hurricanes which were still flying troop support missions to the front lines. The problem was that our new field was still under construction and the Air Force could not simply ground a Bomb Group for a couple months.

It was decided that our Group should be broken up temporarily, with two squadrons, ours and the 724th, going to a field in southern Italy, at San Pancrazio, with the other two squadrons to operate from another field near Manduria. On the second of March our squadron started moving men and planes to the field at San Pancrazio. I took my last pass to Bari the following day and spent my time wandering around the city with three Canadian soldiers from the Eighth Army.

On 5 March our Armament Section was told we would move the following day and we spent the rest of that day packing. The next day we took two of our five tents down, and dismantled our stoves, but the move did not come off. We had to double-up sleeping that night. On the 7th we took our remaining three tents down and three tent-groups of the fellows left that day, some by truck and others on planes. Those of us who remained had to sleep in the open on the ground with only a shelter-half to cover us, as our blankets had been packed and shipped ahead. It was a bitter cold and miserable night.

On the morning of the 8th our fourth tent-group left by plane. My group was the last to leave - we had lunch at the 60th Service Squadron then left via truck. The trip of about three and one-half hours took us through Taranto on very muddy roads and we finally arrived at our new field at San Pancrazio about suppertime in a pouring rain. The other fellows had already put our tent up so we just had to unload and move in. The ground was very muddy and since there was not time to re-assemble our bunk beds, which we had made from scrap wood at Gioia, we scavenged wood and roof tiles from a nearby bombed-out building and put it on the ground to sleep on. Though the tiles kept us out of the mud, they didn't make a very comfortable bed! We even had to load bombs on a couple planes that night in the rain. During the next couple days we made up our improvised bunk beds and got our stove set up.

When we had first started operations at Gioia our armament assignments were somewhat chaotic - we just all pitched in and did whatever work had to be done, regardless of which plane was involved. By mid-February, however, we got a bit better organized. Our Section was divided into three flights, each responsible for four or five planes. Each armorer was assigned to one specific plane but the flight worked together on loading operations. My plane was # 078, "Big Mogul", with Lt. Miller's flight crew. They were a fine crew and with our Crew Chief, T/SGT. Clayton, we were like a small family. Normally the gunners were responsible for cleaning and oiling their guns after every mission, while the armorer did all the maintenance and repair work.

Most of our bomb-loading was done during the night, for several reasons. The decision on what type and how many bombs to load came from 15th Air Force Headquarters and they seldom transmitted that decision before evening, after the day's mission had been evaluated. Once we got the word we had to wait sometimes two, three or more hours for the Ordnance guys to drop the bombs off at the planes. Only then could the armorers begin their work. Usually the fastest response was when we had orders for 500 pound G.P. demolition bombs, as they were the easiest to handle and load.

While at San Pancrazio we developed a new method for loading bombs to speed up our work and reduce labor. Instead of using two winches and a bomb sling, we dispensed with the sling and one winch. We had found that by simply making one turn of the winch cable around the bomb case and attaching the cable hook back onto the cable underneath the shackle we could easily winch the bombs into position by simply letting them slide up along the bomb rack. Thus, with one man cranking the winch and one guiding the bomb, two men, rather than three, could load a plane and could do it much more quickly than by using the standard two-winch method. We felt the method was safe, since the cables were designed for use with 2000 pound bombs, which meant they had a tensile strength well in excess of 1000 pounds each. In a pinch, one man could load a plane by himself, provided he was very careful to get the bomb well balanced on the single cable. I often loaded my plane alone, with 100, 250 and even 500 pound bombs.

We also developed a super-quick method of unloading planes when the bomb load had to be changed. Instead of setting up the winch and cranking each bomb down, we simply released the bombs one at a time by

mechanically moving the shackle releases and letting them drop to the revetment! Of course, the fins and fuzes were removed first and we only used this method on steel-cased demolition bombs. The frags and incendiaries were always lowered by hand, never dropped. This seemed perfectly safe to us since the ground was relatively soft and was covered with the flexible steel matting. In addition, we knew that T.N.T. was quite insensitive to that sort of mechanical shock. Later that year we learned to our dismay that this was NOT true of a newer type of bomb, as I will describe later.

We also developed another innovative bomb-loading technique at San Pancrazio. As noted earlier, a B-24 had a total of 20 bomb racks, which meant that, for example, only 20 100 pound demo bombs could be carried. This was a total load of only 2000 pounds, even though the plane could actually carry 8000 pounds in heavier 1000 or 2000 pound bombs. This represented a considerable waste of capacity which the Air Force should have recognized and done something about long before B-24's went into combat. I do not know who came up with the idea, or even whether it was developed in our Squadron or in our 60th Service Squadron. It was the sort of simple, but brilliant, idea which makes one wonder why he didn't think of it first. The concept was to hang a second small bomb (incendiary, frag cluster or 100 pound demo) outboard of the one attached to the bomb rack using a short length of steel cable hooked around the other bomb. The 60th Service Squadron fabricated the short cables with a loop swaged on each end. The cable was wrapped around the outboard bomb and the loops were slipped over the attachment lugs on the inboard bomb and held in position by the shackle. It worked beautifully - when a bomb rack was triggered, both bombs dropped, the cable simply fell off and the two bombs went on their way. This method doubled the capacity of the B-24 for carrying smaller demolition, fragmentation and incendiary bombs. It more than doubled the work load for the armorers, however, because it was a lot more difficult to load these doubles, especially when they were frag clusters. There was one benefit for us, however - double clusters of frags meant twice as many wood shipping crates which we could use for tent floors and makeshift chairs and bunks.

To give some idea of how our loading schedules went and the problems we had with delays and indecision, I will detail our work for a two-week period in mid-March '44, as taken directly from my journal.

11 March - Planes bombed submarine pens at Toulon, France. That night we started to load ten 500 # bombs on each plane. When we were almost finished orders were changed to load 20 of the large 100 # fragmentation bombs instead. We unloaded the 500's and loaded the frags.

12 March - Mission cancelled. We were ordered to unload the fragmentation bombs and load 500 pounders. Orders changed again - unloaded 500 # bombs and re-loaded the same frag bombs.

13 March - Planes grounded by weather. We unloaded the fragmentation bombs and loaded six 1000 pound bombs per plane. We had to wait for Ordnance, did not get started till 0200 and did not finish until 0430.

14 March - Planes grounded by heavy rain.

15 March - Planes supposed to bomb city of Cassino on troop support mission but most could not find target through clouds and returned with bombs. We removed the 1000 # bombs and loaded 12 500 # bombs per plane, finishing at midnight.

16 March - Planes grounded by weather. We unloaded the 500 # bombs and loaded doubled (40) 100 # incendiary bombs per plane. We worked all night and finished at 0500 in the morning.

17 March - Planes bombed target in Vienna. We did not receive loading orders until midnight, then it was double-clusters (40) of fragmentation bombs. We worked all night.

18 March - Planes bombed troop concentrations in northern Italy. We loaded ten 500 # bombs per plane that night.

19 March - Planes bombed Klagenfurt, Austria. We loaded 12 500 pound bombs per plane.

20 March - Planes grounded by weather. We unloaded the 500 pounders and loaded double-clusters of frags.

21 March - Mission cancelled by weather. Unloaded the frags in the morning. Planes went on a practice flight. "Ice Cold Katie", # 751, cracked up on landing and was badly damaged. We loaded 12 500 # bombs that night.

22 March - Planes left on a mission to Austria but target covered with clouds and all returned with full bomb load.

23 March - Planes grounded by weather. A 724th plane, "Wolf Wagon" blew up while taking off on a practice mission and crashed. No survivors.

24 March - Planes bombed ball bearing factory at Steyr, Austria.

25 March - Planes grounded by weather. We loaded double (40) 100 # incendiaries that night.

As can be seen from the above, the weather in March was atrocious. Our planes flew only ten missions that entire month, largely because of the poor weather. As I try to think back to those days at San Pancrazio I can think only of mud and long, backbreaking nights. For some reason I have no clear memory of our tent area, the line area or the field itself. That one-month period is almost a blank in my memory, as though the awful weather and primitive living conditions caused my mind to blank it all out. Since I had no film for most of that time, I don't even have any photos to jog my memory. By contrast, however, two or three events of that period do stand out in sharp relief over these forty years.

It was common knowledge that there was a large Italian/German bomb and ammunition dump on a small hill near our field. On Sunday, 19 March a group of several of us from the Armament Section decided to go and see what was there while the planes were on their mission. We took a weapons carrier and drove up a dirt road to the dump. The first thing we saw was a very large aerial bomb of at least 1000 to 1500 kilos. From its general design we decided it was Italian, rather than German. We looked it over very carefully to verify that the fuzes had been removed, then when we were quite sure it was safe several guys sat on the thing and the rest stood behind while I took their picture. There was almost every sort of ordnance in that dump that one could imagine. We could see several sizes of bombs, a huge pile of artillery shells and scattered all about were a variety of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. One of our fellows started to walk into the dump but the rest of us told him to get the hell out, which he did.

Just two days later I was sickened to learn that two of the gunners from my plane, Big Mogul, Sergeants Hall and Whitney, had gone to the same dump and had both been killed by an anti-personnel mine. No one else was present and no one knew what had happened, though there was speculation that one of them may have fired his pistol into the mess. If so, it was an incredibly stupid thing to do, as the whole dump might have gone up. The mine that killed them was a German "Bouncing Betty" anti-personnel mine, sometimes also called a "Butterfly" mine. When triggered they jumped up and exploded shrapnel at waist height. One man was dead and the other dying when they were discovered. Both were buried at the U.S. Military Cemetery in Bari. They were friends and I was sick about it. I wondered if I had mentioned the big bomb to them and if so whether that had led them to visit the dump. I still wonder when I think of it. After their deaths the Air Force declared the area off limits, but it was too late for them. There must have been hundreds of abandoned bomb and munitions dumps scattered all over Europe after the war. Whatever became of them? How many children may have died playing in such places?

On 30 March we bombed the marshalling yards at Sofia. When the planes returned "Lonesome Polecat", No. 114, fired a red flare and, as on 8 February, we could see a red discoloration all over the nose. This time no one speculated about hydraulic fluid - we knew it was blood. The nose gunner had been hit in the head by a cannon shell from an ME-109, and it was every bit as bad as what happened to "Three Feathers". Fortunately, "Polecat" was assigned to another Flight so I was not involved in the clean-up this time.

I had my own problem. During the mission one of Jack Garrison's tail guns had jammed on "Big Mogul". We were grounded the next day and I spent the entire day working on the gun with Jack. We changed almost every part that had anything to do with cartridge feed, but still the gun would jam when it was charged. Finally, we removed the entire gun and replaced it with a new one. Unbelievably, the new gun also jammed! It was already late at night, so I had no choice but to red-line the plane, something I had never had to do before.

We were still grounded on 1 April and I spent the day working on the gun and related hardware. Our top Non-com, M/Sgt. Jones spent several

hours helping me but even he gave up on it. Everyone was just plain stumped. The next morning, out of desperation, I removed every bit of the ammunition from the tail turret and had Ordnance bring me some new belts. When I had it loaded and fed it into the gun it worked beautifully! The Ordnance guys then checked the old ammo and found that a section of the belt which was from the "defective" gun had been improperly belted. Either the belting machine was out of adjustment or someone had not operated it correctly, as the rounds had simply not been fully inserted into the links. We were all dumbfounded!

"Big Mogul" was thus ready to go on a mission to Budapest on April third, though she missed one to Steyr the previous day. When she returned from Budapest one engine was badly shot up and one tire flattened. Lt. Miller brought her in beautifully on three engines and the flat, but she was out of commission for several days for an engine change.

Around the first of April we were advised to start packing our gear and equipment for early transfer to our new field near Foggia. We all hoped it wasn't an Air Force April Fool's joke!.

On 5 April we bombed the Astra Oil Refinery and marshalling yards at Ploesti, Rumania. For this mission the 451st received its second Distinguished Unit Citation (Oak Leaf Cluster). Thirty-four planes took off, but six returned because of mechanical trouble. On the way to and over the target they were attacked by over 100 ME-109's and FW-190's, as well as by heavy flak batteries. The Group claimed 20 fighters shot down and 12 more probably destroyed. We lost five B-24's one of which exploded over the target. All planes lost were from the 724th and 727th Squadrons.

We had a stand-down the following day and since the weather had cleared a bit several of us went to visit an Italian family at a nearby farm. The farmer's wife had been doing our laundry for us so we took along some candy, cigarettes, soap and a few other things we swiped from the mess tent as gifts. In return the old man broke out several bottles of typical "Dago-red" wine and we had a very pleasant afternoon. I took a number of photographs while there.

Our Armament Section was supposed to leave by plane on 7 April for our new field. We took our tents down and packed all of our bags and waited, and waited, and waited for orders. Nothing happened. We ended up having to sleep in the open on the ground that night, but fortunately it was a clear night, though we were covered with dew by morning. We did leave the next morning by truck convoy and arrived at our new base at 1630 after a long, hard and dusty ride. We managed to get our tents up that night, but not our bunk beds.

Our new field was located near the small town of Castelluccio de Sauri about 25 Km. south of Foggia and west of Cerignola. It was constructed by the Corps of Engineers on a high plateau, overlooking a broad valley. The 5000 foot runway was covered with steel matting and had a cleared crash strip on either side. It was a beautiful sight to behold after our experiences at Gioia and San Pancrazio! Surrounding the runway were taxiways leading to dispersed hardstands or revetments which

were also covered with steel matting. One end of the runway simply aimed out over the valley, while near the other end was a large building which had apparently once been the landowner's home. This was the only building of any sort on the field and was immediately claimed by Col. Eaton for Group Headquarters. Specific areas were designated for each Squadron. The runway ran roughly northwest by southeast and our Squadron was located near the northwest end. The 725th area was just east of us while the 724th was at the other end of the runway, near Group H.Q. The 727th Squadron was located on the other side of the runway, near the center. Finally, our 60th Air Service Squadron was located on the opposite side of the end of the runway from us. There was a small stream flowing in the valley around our side of the plateau. The very next day several of us went down and jumped in the ice-cold water for our second bath since leaving the states.

Within a few days we had our tents, stoves and bunks all fixed up and were really comfortable, since it was fairly dry at our high location. We also got our line armament tents all set up, and equipment pretty well organized. Because we were now well within range of Luftwaffe fighter airstrips in central Italy we dug slit trenches around each tent in case the Krauts came to call. Our first mission from Castelluccio was on 12 April against marshalling yards at Zagreb. We flew twelve missions that month, mostly against marshalling yards and airdromes in northern Italy, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary. We also hit the submarine pens at Toulon again on the 29th.

The weather continued cold and towards the end of April we had heavy rains which flooded some of our tents. There were many former Italian soldiers in the area and the Air Force hired some of them to help our cooks (no more K.P. for us!) and to construct buildings from local stone. They were good masons and by early summer they had erected a mess/club building for the officers and had put up several permanent buildings as work shops on the line. We got an armament building and a nice extension for our bombsight maintenance shop. Later, after the officers' club was built, a similar one was constructed for the enlisted men, but we had to wait a while.

One of the roughest nights we had came on 22/23 April. Our planes had bombed Bucharest marshalling yards on the 22nd and at midnight, in the middle of a red alert, when we had almost finished re-loading with 500 pound bombs, we received a change of orders to load double clusters of frags instead. After dropping the 500's, we waited until 0600 for our Ordnance people to bring up the fragmentation bombs. Takeoff was scheduled for 1000 and we just barely made it! I was still connecting arming wires in the open bomb bay while Lt. Miller warmed up his engines and made his pre-flight checks.

After we got established at Castelluccio, I began to go up with Miller on occasional practice flights to run power turret and gun tests. The gunners were usually happy to let me do that, as they could skip the flights and thus not tempt fate once too often. I enjoyed flying and was really fascinated by the rugged mountain ranges over which Allied and German troops were waging such bitter struggles.

May 1944 was a busy month, with our Group flying 20 combat missions. The month opened with an attack on targets in the Budapest area. That night we had an anniversary show at Group H.Q. to celebrate the formation of the 451st in May of '43. On the 3rd we received a new G model B-24, #250, produced by North American, which was basically the same as the H models made by Consolidated, Ford and Douglas. There was one difference - this was one of the first planes we received in plain aluminum finish, as contrasted with the camouflage paint on all of our original planes. This plane was assigned to Lt. Miller so I had a new plane to work on for the next couple days. He later named her "Goosey Lucy" for his wife. On the 5th I flew on a test flight to check out all the turrets and guns. Lucy flew her first combat mission on the 7th and Miller was lead pilot for the entire Group on a mission to the marshalling yards at Bucharest.

On 19 May during takeoff for a mission, the elevator cable on Lucy somehow came off its pulley. Miller was more than half way down the runway with a full bomb load when he realized he had no pitch control. Had he continued the takeoff he would almost surely have crashed, but it was nearly too late to abort. Nevertheless, he hit his brakes hard and screeched towards the end of the runway with blue smoke coming from the tires. At the last instant he executed a ground loop and finally came to a stop on the crash strip right at the end of the runway. One tire blew in the process, but the plane was otherwise undamaged. I think it was the finest example of pilot control I ever saw. The crew all jumped out of the plane completely shaken.

Early in April, as the weather turned milder, we began to modify our pyramidal tents by extending three of the side panels outwards and adding wood support walls. This greatly increased our floor area and made the tents more comfortable for the coming hot weather. Every tent was a bit different, with each group of men incorporating their own ideas for design and decor. Some tents even had skylights made from discarded plexiglas astro-domes from wrecked aircraft. This sort of tent modification was largely confined to the tents of the enlisted men. The officers, who lived in a separate tent area across the road from us, seldom did anything special with their tents. Since there were only four officers to a tent, contrasted with eight enlisted men to the same size tent, they were far less crowded and hence not inclined to make such modifications.

We had a stand down on the 11th and I took a pass to Cerignola. That evening I pulled guard duty. We had armed guards on the planes every night against the possibility of sabotage. By this time we were having movies at Group H.Q. almost every night so those who weren't working on the line or on guard duty usually piled into a weapons carrier and drove over for the movie after chow. It gave us something to do on free evenings, even if some of the films weren't all that good.

We had a Wing inspection on 16 May but I managed to avoid it as I was replacing a damaged gun barrel jacket on the ball turret of my plane. I had another pass on the 18th and went to Cerignola and Foggia to take photos and visit the service club. When I got back to the base that night I learned we had orders to load 2000 pound bombs, which meant that we first had to mount in each bomb bay the special bomb

racks that held those very large bombs. The racks never fit very well and there were instances when we actually had to use the winches to pull the sides of the bomb bay in enough to get the mounting bolts in place. We worked all night loading those bombs and then the mission the next day, to a viaduct in northern Italy, was aborted because of weather. A day later we had to unload all the 2000 pounders and remove the special racks from each plane.

The oil refineries at Ploesti continued to get our attention - we bombed them three times in May, which was indicative of the remarkable ability of the Germans to repair bomb damage in a surprisingly short time.

By this time I was receiving one or two films in every package I received from home and my parents were also sending me packages of hypo, tubes of MQ developer and photo printing paper. It was my intent to develop and print my films so that I could send pictures home. For this work I had arranged to use an almost ideal facility. As part of its basic maintenance equipment, each squadron had a bombsight maintenance shop. This was a small building, the upper half of which was designed to fit into the lower half for shipment. When set up it had good head room and plenty of shelf space. The building, which we called the bombsight shack, had its own power generator and lighting system, as well as a temperature control system with filtered air supply. I had become good friends with the three bombsight maintenance men and sometimes helped them calibrate sights when I had free time. They agreed to let me use the building to develop and print films on a non-interference basis with their needs, which meant that I used it mostly during the night.

I had no equipment for this work at all. An ordinary 40 watt light bulb painted red served for my printing safelight and for processing trays I started off using pans borrowed from the squadron kitchen. Later on I made up some nice trays using plexiglas. For printing I first used simply a piece of glass over the film and paper, with an overhead bulb for a printing light. Later in the year I fabricated a fairly decent contact printer using a discarded ammunition box.

The biggest problem was how to wash the film and prints, since, of course, there was no running water available. At first I carried everything down to the creek to do the washing, but the water was simply not clean enough. Finally, I just used the multiple soaking bath method with drinking water from one of our Lister bags. It was a slow, tedious process, using perhaps twenty or thirty changes of water. I am truly surprised that such a crude process actually worked fairly well. I still have all of those negatives I exposed overseas and after forty years they still show no sign of fading or staining, though some are scratched and have a few dirt particles imbedded in the emulsion. Even most of the prints which I sent home to my parents are in good condition, with only minor fading.

After the word got around as to what I was doing several other fellows asked me to process their films for them, which I did as long as I had enough supplies. When I ran short of paper I was usually able to con the Group photo lab boys out of a few sheets. Consequently, when I

had a free evening I usually spent it developing and printing in the bombsight shack. And often after the bombs were loaded in the evening I would work the rest of the night printing and then walk to the line before breakfast to see the planes off.

Around the middle of May the Group began to receive a few B-24's equipped with target-identifying radar installations. We called these planes "Mickey Mouse" aircraft because of all the strange equipment we didn't understand. The name "Mickey" stuck and everyone called them that till the end of hostilities. These planes were painted a very dark color, almost black, and though they were attached to our Group they normally didn't fly with the Group. Instead they usually went on solo missions, often leaving at dusk and not returning until first light. These missions were highly classified and we never knew where they went or how successful they had been. They were parked in special locations and maintained under constant armed guard. Specially trained technicians were brought in to maintain the radar equipment, but the Squadron people did the regular airframe and engine work. We also loaded the bombs and maintained the armament on the Mickeys.

On my birthday, 4 June, I got a pass and went to Foggia and also to Lucera, where I visited an old Roman amphitheater. That was also the day when American troops first entered Rome, which Kesselring had declared an open city. Two days later Allied troops invaded Normandy and we began to think we might see the light at the end of the tunnel.

It was not always easy to know what was really going on in the war for those of us who were there. The Army published a monthly newsprint magazine called "Yank" for the troops overseas but it did not contain current news. There was also the newspaper, "Stars and Stripes" which was published for the troops in Italy and we had our own Group newsletter called "Ad-Libs". The best current news coverage was from the Armed Forces Radio station in Naples or from the BBC. After we finished loading bombs I would often turn on the plane's radio for a while in the hope of getting a late news broadcast from the BBC. I also often tuned in Berlin to listen to Axis Sally. She had an incredibly sexy voice and her program included recordings of the latest songs from the U.S., interspersed with a blatant propaganda line. I have always wondered how she acquired all those up-to-the-minute records. Her favorite line was to "feel sorry" for the G.I.'s fighting overseas while their wives and sweethearts were undoubtedly sleeping with rich Jewish war-profiteers and 4-F's at home. Having neither wife nor sweetheart, this didn't bother me a bit and I rather enjoyed her program, especially the music. When I saw a photo of Mildred Gillers after the War, I was rather disappointed, as she was not the gorgeous creature of my mind's eye.

As the winter of '44 had been cold, wet and miserable, the summer was quite the opposite, very hot and often windy and dusty. The planes would churn up clouds of dust while they warmed up engines or taxied for takeoff. We were very thankful for the small creek where we could cool off and wash most of the grime and dust from our bodies. There were several teen-aged boys who came to our camp from Castelluccio and each tended to "adopt" one or two tent-groups. Our boy, Pasquale, did

chores for us and helped keep our tent clean in return for whatever food we could scrounge for him. He also took our laundry home for his mother to wash for us. We provided the soap, with enough extra for use by the family, and she did a very good job, considering it was all done by hand. Even so, when I look at photos of myself wearing my work coveralls, I am struck by how dirty I must have been most of the time. Working on guns and bombs was a dirty, grimy job and after a while the grime was so ground into our work clothing that nothing could have removed it.

It was my observation that most American soldiers were very considerate of the Italian civilians who were terribly impoverished and without adequate food. But there was a limit to how much food we could filch from the mess for our "tent boy". I can still recall vividly one day when I was on a garbage detail at San Pancrazio and we took a truckload of garbage to a nearby dump. There were scores of local people there waiting to grab whatever they could find to eat. I saw one teen-age boy hit an old lady on the side of the head with a heavy stick to prevent her from picking up a can of something he wanted. The truck driver leveled his carbine at the boy and I thought for a moment he was going to shoot the kid, but he only intended to warn him not to do that again.

By 9 June our Squadron had flown 51 consecutive combat missions without the loss of a single plane. Our C.O. said it was the best record in the entire Air Force. On the 10th, however, Lonesome Polecat (114) was shot up and crashed in the Adriatic with a loss of two killed and seven injured. That night we had an unusual bomb load. By using special cables we double-loaded 250 lb. demolition bombs, managing to get 18 on each plane, rather than the usual 12. We could not get two bombs in the topmost position.

By 12 June the Air Force decided that summer had arrived and we were ordered to turn in our wool O.D.'s and two blankets. That very night the temperature dropped into the 40's and we shivered with just two blankets. We were also finally issued regular Army canvas cots, so we dismantled our homemade bunks for the last time.

On 15 June we heard the good news that B-29's had bombed Tokyo and that the Marines had invaded Saipan. We received very little news about the Pacific War, but this was an indication that progress was being made.

I had a pass on the 17th and spent the day visiting Foggia, Cerignola and Barletta. Since we were located within the Eighth Army zone in Italy we saw far more troops of our Allies than G.I.'s on the streets. In addition to the English there were Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Poles, Free French, Scots and colonials such as Sikhs, Gurkhas, Rajputs, Algerians and Goums from Morocco. It was a fascinating kaleidoscope of men and uniforms. The Gurkhas and Goums (or Goumiers) were fabled knife fighters and were generally used against German sentries and outposts at night. Many a German in Italy had his throat silently slit by these troops during the bitter fighting before Cassino. The Goums were fond of taking ears from their enemies and for a while the British were said to have given them bonuses for these

grisly trophies. From the standpoint of nationalities involved in the conflict, Italy was probably the most unique battlefield of the War.

On 24 June Dale Miller's crew finished their 50th mission and their war was over. Most of our original air crews were completing their combat tours in June and July and we were beginning to get more replacement crews in the Group. Another big event on the 24th was completion of our new Squadron shower facility by our Italian workmen. We now had the luxury of not only bathing but also of being able to cool off quickly during the hot summer months. Once the shower was operating I often took two showers a day just to cool off.

The following day we had the hardest rain we had experienced in Italy. Our dusty roads turned to quagmires and many tents flooded. This encouraged us to speed up the modification work on our tents - to finish our floors and sidewalls which we had been working on without a great deal of determination. I completed my corner within a few days and even built in a little alcove for reading and letter writing. We quickly went from the flood back to drought and on the last day of June a grass fire got out of control and burned down two tents in the officers' area.

Sometime probably in May or June (my journal didn't mention it) our Armament officer, Lt. Luhrs, was transferred and we got a new officer, Lt. Adams. He later made Captain and got an assistant, Lt. Cone, who had absolutely nothing to do and was well qualified for the job! On the third of July I was finally promoted to Corporal. I had about given up hope! For some time I had known that on our section Table of Organization (T.O.) I was listed as being in line to become a Staff Sergeant. I never made it. The problem was that whenever a gunner was taken off flight duty for medical reasons (we called it being "Flak Happy") he was almost invariably transferred to the Armament Section. Since every gunner had the rank of either Staff or Tech Sergeant, it meant that our T.O. was always filled at those levels. When Adams sent in a promotion request for any of the rest of us, Air Force H.Q. turned it down because we were already above our authorized quota for Non-Commissioned Officers. And there was nothing anyone could do about it.

During the heat of July we started getting rumors about moving to another theater, with Russia and India being mentioned as possibilities. This was more than the usual Army outhouse rumor. Lt. Adams was requested to start making packing estimates for all of our equipment and spares and several of us participated in the work. Eventually, however, nothing came of it.

Though we flew some 22 combat missions in July, we were hard pressed to get enough planes in the air for lack of crews. Our original crews were completing their 50 missions faster than we were receiving new crews and some days we were only able to put up four to six planes, as compared with the norm of twelve for a squadron. Some of our first crews had started home by the tenth of the month.

On 12 July I was delighted to have a visit from an old boyhood friend, Percy Dingle from Chesterland. We had been neighbors at Circle W Farm (Perc's father was in charge of Mrs. White's horses) and though he was

three years older than I we were close friends through our mutual interest in building model airplanes. Perc had gone into the Service in early '42 and was trained as a medic. He was later assigned to the 55th Station Hospital which was sent directly to North Africa during the invasion in November. After the African campaign ended at Bizerte his hospital moved first to Sicily, then to Italy.

I showed Perc all over our area and took him to the line to see our planes. He spent the night with me and the next day I arranged a pass and hitch-hiked with him back to his hospital at Caserta, where I had lunch before returning to the field. It was a very enjoyable and welcome interlude.

On 14 July our Group C.O., Col. Eaton, flew on my plane. Eaton was a rather large, even chubby, man and when he was dressed in his heavy flying suit and flak jacket he looked sort of like an armored blimp. He had to have an assist getting up into the plane. The target that day was an oil refinery in Hungary. The following day we hit another refinery near Ploesti. Most of our targets during July were refineries marshalling yards and aircraft factories.

On 16 July our remaining original crews, including Miller's, left for home via truck to Naples, where they embarked on a troop ship. In early '83, when Jack Garrison, Miller's tail gunner, visited me, I learned that they went home on the maiden voyage of the troopship U.S.S. General Meigs. This was the same ship which was to take us home less than one year later.

On 22 July we bombed Ploesti once again. On takeoff my plane, "Goosey Lucy" (#250) seemed to be lifting normally, but suddenly started to settle near the end of the runway. Just beyond the end of the runway the land dipped a bit, then rose to a small hill and finally dropped away abruptly to the valley below. I thought the ship would just clear the final hill, but instead it slammed into it and instantly caught fire. Several of us who were watching at the end of the runway ran over to the wreckage to help any survivors. I pulled one badly crushed man away from the flames but just as I started back to find someone else two of the 1000 pound bombs aboard exploded, one after the other. There was nothing else we could do. In all, five men were pulled out alive, though badly injured. The other five died, including the fellow I pulled away. They were members of Maj. Winski's crew and I knew them all very well. He had been serving as our Operations Officer and so was not the pilot that day.

I was deafened for two or three hours after the crash from the concussion of the bombs. I was also sick at heart over the deaths of friends and the loss of a plane that was part of my life. I spent most of the day in my cot, simply washed out.

Our planes flew quite a few practice missions during July for the purpose of training the new crews in formation flying and bombing techniques. Overall the quality of the replacement crews was far below that of our original crews. They generally seemed to lack motivation and interest in what they were doing. The gunners took little interest in their equipment and seldom cleaned their guns properly. After our

original crews (those who had not been lost in combat) returned home there was never again the genuine feeling of camaraderie which had previously existed between air and ground crews. Somehow, we could never seem to establish that close bond with the replacement crews. Even now, I am not sure why. It was at least partly because they seemed far less competent than our original crews, but also, I suspect, because they had not shared with us the long training at Wendover and Fairmont and had not suffered with us during the miserable winter days at Gioia and San Pancrazio.

Curiously, I had the same sort of feelings with regard to our aircraft. It would be difficult to explain to most people, but I developed a very close feeling of attachment (if that is the word) to "Big Mogul" and "Goosey Lucy" which I never again felt for any other plane I was assigned to after July of '44. This was partly, I suppose, because we had a greater turnover in planes after that date. Our Squadron lost at least four times as many planes in the second half of '44 as it lost in the first half of the year. Why this was true is difficult to say. It could not have been because of Luftwaffe opposition because our bomber flights had far better escort protection during the latter part of the year. During the early part of the year our planes were escorted only part way to their targets by Spitfires and P-38's, which simply didn't have enough range to escort all the way. Later in the year, however, bombers were escorted all the way to the target and back by long-range P-51's and P-47's, using belly drop tanks. In addition, the effectiveness of German fighters decreased significantly during the latter part of '44. The power of the Luftwaffe was in a sharp decline, from which it never recovered. Flak, however, was another matter - it remained a very serious threat well into '45 and most of our losses were from that source. Still, I doubt if our targets and their protective flak batteries were any more difficult in late '44 than earlier in the year. Thus, I cannot but think that our heavier losses later in the year were at least partly because of factors relating to crew training and discipline.

The numerous training flights which were scheduled during the summer required more work of the armorers. For practice gunnery missions we had to remove the combat ammunition and replace it with practice ammo. The latter consisted simply of lead bullets and tracers, whereas our combat ammo was belted in a sequence of two armor piercing bullets, two incendiary bullets and one tracer. For the practice bombing missions we actually had to load our old friends from training days, the 100 pound "Blue Screamers". It has always seemed incredible to me that the Air Force would have used up precious shipping space to transport training bombs to a combat area in time of war. Such training should have been accomplished in the States and that it was not done borders on incompetency, if not dereliction of duty.

On 25 July our Squadron led the entire 15th Air Force in an attack on the Hermann Goering Tank Factory at Linz. Our squadron had no losses and the Group claimed eleven German fighters destroyed. The following day on another mission "Three Feathers" (636) was damaged over Albania and was forced to land at an emergency field at Lecce. On the 28th "Ice Cold Katie II" (541) was shot down over Ploesti. On many occasions after missions, planes failed to return to base and we might have no idea what happened to them for days - they were simply missing.

Fortunately, in many such cases the pilot was able to make an emergency landing at some other field in southern Italy or elsewhere. The Partisans had carved out several emergency landing fields in Yugoslavia and on islands off the coast. There was also an emergency field on Corsica. After the planes were repaired and refueled they were flown back to our field, often weeks later and often in very bad condition from being exposed to salt spray, dust, etc.

Around the end of July we started to receive 500 pound bombs with the words, "Component B" stenciled on them. It meant nothing to us until sometime later that summer when a significant event occurred. I did not record the date in my diary but one day the Ordnance men from another Squadron (I believe it was the 727th) were loading bombs at the railroad yard for transfer to the bomb dump at our field when something went wrong and one or more bombs exploded. The men, their vehicle and the bomb trailer were blown to bits. Naturally, Ordnance officers from 15th Air Force Headquarters launched an immediate investigation. It turned out the men were loading "Component B" 500 pound bombs and the investigators concluded that they had either dropped a bomb on the concrete loading pad or had allowed two bombs to roll into one another with enough force to cause the explosion. The investigating team also discovered that no one at our base was aware that these new bombs contained, not T.N.T., but a new and far more sensitive explosive identified as R.D.X. We had simply "never gotten the word" from anyone in A.F.H.Q. In the course of their investigation they also discovered, apparently to their horror, our improvised method for unloading bombs from our planes by simply dropping them from the bomb rack to the ground. Belatedly, all armorers and ordnance men were given stern lectures on the inherent danger in handling these R.D.X. bombs and our "drop" method for unloading was forthwith prohibited. From that point on we handled these special bombs with tender, loving care and when we had to unload them we used the winches. However, as long as none of the officers were around we continued to use our quick drop method for unloading T.N.T. bombs. We heard, and I have since verified through documented reports, that at least two Eighth A.F. B-17's were blown up, along with their armorers, because of careless handling of R.D.X. bombs. So far as I know the accident cited above was the only one to occur in the 15th Air Force. It would appear that a number of ex-armorers may yet be living on borrowed time!

On 1 August I had a pass and I went to the Eighth Army area with the intent of trying to locate some German 9mm ammunition for an Italian pistol which I had obtained. I first went to a British tank training area where I managed to get a few rounds, then I headed towards the front on a British supply truck. Finally, an M.P. suggested I had better not go any farther without a helmet, as artillery was firing just a few hundred meters ahead of me. I was standing at the intersection of two roads talking with a small group of soldiers from New Zealand. The M.P. was directing traffic and there were a couple other soldiers on the other corner. Coming down the road from the front we saw a group of men marching towards us at route step. As they came closer we realized they were German prisoners being led by one of their own officers - a Major - and guarded by two armed British soldiers, one on either side of the column. There were perhaps 18 or 20 men in the group. When they were about a hundred feet from us the

Major barked a command and the soldiers all snapped to a smart march formation. It was clear to us that he wished his men to look and act like professional soldiers as they passed by us. Then an incredible thing happened. The six of us, five Kiwis and one G.I., without a word being spoken, suddenly snapped to attention and saluted this enemy officer and his men! The British M.P., noting our action, came to present arms and as he did the German Major returned the salute and held it till they were past the intersection. It was not a "Heil Hitler" Nazi salute, but a conventional military salute. That tableau of mutual military respect between victors and captives is forever etched in my memory. Why did we, without conscious thought or agreement, tender that salute to our enemy? Was it an automatic response to the officer's uniform or a deliberate reply to their shift from route-step to marching cadence as they passed us? To this day I really don't know. At the time it seemed the proper thing to do. One of the New Zealanders summed it up for all of us when he said, "I've fought those blighters for two and a half years and I'll have to say this for them, they're bloody good soldiers".

Whenever I was around a British outfit I looked forward to the chance of watching a parade formation, especially Retreat. I was fascinated by the professional way they marched, the way they swung their arms and executed maneuvers. British soldiers were, and I suppose still are, masters at marching. Virtually every British outfit I ever saw in formation looked like a professional drill team. By contrast, most Americans marched very poorly, on the average. Perhaps it is because the British take more pride in their military heritage and in their regimental history, while Americans, especially citizen-soldiers, tend to take a dim view of military spit-and-polish and regimentation in general. There surely must be an intrinsic difference between serving, for example, in the Grenadier Guards or the Black Watch, as opposed to the 123rd Regiment or the 78th Brigade.

On the 5th of August we had another very heavy rain which flooded most of the tents. Italy seemed to have a climate of extremes; either we were wading in mud or choking in dust. We often wondered where the expression "sunny Italy" came from! The following day we got in a new plane, # 484, which was mine, to replace Goosey Lucy. She was assigned to Lt. Olds, who named her "Merry Barbara" after his wife. She was to last for just six missions - after another raid on Ploesti on the 17th Olds had to ditch her in the Adriatic. Only he and one gunner survived. I worked on her for two days before her first mission.

Some evenings after our work was done several of us who were close friends would have a sort of party in the bombsight shack. We shared food which we received in packages from home and sometimes we even had boiled eggs which we had purchased at a fairly high price from a local farm family. One of the bombsight technicians had somehow managed to find a small hotplate which we used to heat up C rations and to toast bread from the mess hall. Our regular meals at the mess hall, which the Italian workers had built for us, were reasonably good, but monotonous. We never had any fresh meat or vegetables, of course, as everything came from the states canned. There was canned butter which was awful and canned Spam which we could hardly face any more after the first few months. And then there was the ubiquitous chipped beef on bread which we called, "shit on a shingle". But we survived!

On 10 August we flew our 100th combat mission - once again against the Ploesti oil refineries. The next day "Three Feathers" returned to the field after her forced landing on 26 July. She was in terrible shape. Much of the loose equipment, including several guns, had been thrown overboard in the emergency and the remaining guns were badly rusted from exposure. Under normal operations we and the gunners covered all turrets and guns with heavy canvas covers to protect them from rain and dew. We spent several days cleaning and replacing guns and other equipment before "Three Feathers" could go back to work.

On 12 August five members of our Armament Section, in accordance with orders received a few days earlier, left for home. Neither they nor the rest of us had any idea why they were being shipped home. We always assumed they were being sent to be assigned to a B-29 Group or to help train new armorers.

On 14 August the entire 15th Air Force pounded the southern coast of France to soften up the beachhead for the invasion which took place the next morning. The aircrews reported seeing over 800 vessels of all types headed for France. This came as no surprise to most of us, as ships had been concentrating in harbors on the west coast of Italy for several days. On a practice flight two or three days earlier I had seen hundreds of ships in Naples harbor. On the 15th, while taking off on another mission to the southern France beach area, one of our planes, "Cannon Fodder" (# 102) crashed, killing three crew members.

In early July the Air Force had established a policy of granting three-day rest passes to Rome for enlisted ground crew personnel who had served overseas at least six months. There had already been a rest and relaxation (R & R) policy for the air crews, for whom a rest camp had been established on the Isle of Capri. I'm sure there was also a separate rest camp for ground Officers, complete with lots of booze, dancing girls and liveried flunkies, but I knew nothing about it. At any rate my turn for a pass to Rome came on the 17th. I, with eight or ten others, flew to Rome on "Skipper" a tired old B-24 which had been converted to transport duty, which included flights to Cairo to pick up liquor for the officers' club. The flight took 45 minutes. I bummed a ride into the city and located a place to stay which had been recommended to me by one of our other guys who had recently returned from his pass. It was a flat owned by a very nice middle-aged lady whose husband was a Colonel in the Italian Army who had been captured by the British in 1942. She had not heard from him since his capture but had been notified he was safe in a British prisoner of war camp in Canada. She had one extra room which she rented out to G.I.'s for 150 Lira. Before I left the field I had managed to "requisition" from our kitchen a half can of coffee, some chocolate, a couple cans of Spam and one or two other things which I stuffed in my duffel bag for the trip. My buddy Johnnie had told me how kind the lady had been to him and what a tough time she was having just trying to survive. She was absolutely overjoyed with this small amount of food and told me I could have the room at no charge. I wouldn't agree, of course, and as I recall, I gave her about 800 Lira for the three nights I spent there. The room was small but pleasant, with a fairly comfortable bed and immaculately clean linens.

After arranging for the room I took my camera and went to the nearby Red Cross Service Club to get a light lunch. There I also managed to get a map of the city and I promptly set off to see all the Roman ruins I had read so much about in ancient history. That afternoon and for the next two days I really walked my legs off visiting and photographing every ruin within walking distance. Fortunately, most of them were concentrated around the Forum. As a history buff, I was in "hog heaven", and I knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

It was very hot most of the time, but I was on the go almost from first light till dark. I grabbed quick meals at the Service Club. On the 18th I spent most of my time at Vatican City, seeing St. Peters, the fabulous Vatican museums and the Sistine Chapel. Cameras were not allowed in the church and museums but I carried mine under my shirt and managed to sneak several pictures, constantly wondering whether, if caught, one of those Swiss Guards would cleave my skull with his halberd!

Each night, after supper, I returned to my room and usually visited with my landlady. During the previous six months I had tried my best to learn Italian from our "tent boy" and from the Italian kitchen helpers. I was able to converse reasonably well with them by this time and was anxious to try out my hard won new skill with my hostess. It proved to be something of a disaster. There are, it seems, very distinct dialects in Italy and the southern peasant variety which I had been trying so hard to learn was looked upon with disdain by educated Romans, such as my kindly landlady. In addition, I had the distinct impression that some of the words I had learned were simply not used in polite conversation. She very patiently corrected much of what I tried to say, but nevertheless we got along fairly well.

On the 19th I visited a number of places I had missed the first day, including the Pantheon. Sunday morning, the 20th I took a Red Cross sponsored tour of the catacombs, walked along part of the Appian Way and went for one last time to gaze, with wonder and awe, at the Colosseum. Then, late in the afternoon, I bid goodbye to my landlady, and caught a G.I. bus to the airport. I flew back to our field on "Flabbergasted Fanny" (# 242).

When I got back it was a shock to learn about "Merry Barbara" which went down the very day I left for Rome. The next day, 22 August, proved to be perhaps our most disastrous mission. Out of 28 planes which the Group flew to bomb oil storage facilities near Vienna, 14 were shot down, mostly by ME-109's, and several others were placed in Class 26 after returning because of severe damage. (Class 26 was a designation for planes so badly damaged that they could not be repaired at the Squadron level. These planes were moved to the 60th Air Service Squadron where they managed to repair some, while others were scrapped for parts.) Our Squadron lost three planes, "Old Taylor" (# 111), "Wet Dream" (# 300) and "Screamin' Meemie II" (# 580). In addition, "The A Train" (# 082) was put in Class 26. It was a very black day for us. No Bomb Group could survive losses like that for very long. The following day, however, was to be almost as bad.

On 23 August our target was the Markersdorf Airdrome near Vienna. We put up 25 planes, of which nine were shot down by FW-190's before they reached the target. We claimed 18 enemy fighters destroyed, with another eight probably destroyed. Our bombs were well aimed at the airdrome and destroyed at least 12 German fighters on the ground. The German fighters apparently concentrated on our Group, as the 484th and 461st Groups suffered only minor loss. For this mission our Group was awarded its third Distinguished Unit Citation - our second Oak Leaf Cluster. Our Squadron losses were "Small Fry" (# 429) and # 334.

Towards the end of August we were starting to fly some Group missions with radar planes (Mickey's) flying lead. The Air Force was apparently satisfied that these new planes could bomb effectively through clouds and overcast which made optical bombsights useless. The radar planes were officially called Pathfinders. They were especially equipped with a photoflash flare mounted in a steel cylinder at the tail. When the Bombardier in the Pathfinder released his load on the target the flash bomb was automatically ignited and sent a very bright flash out both ends of the cylinder in which it was mounted. This could be seen for miles and was the signal for all the other Bombardiers in the Group to drop their bomb loads. In most cases the other planes didn't even carry a bombsight on such missions. The results were not always something to brag about and there is little doubt that a great many bombs so dropped fell off target with resultant civilian casualties.

This sort of bombing was much like the area bombing used by the R.A.F. and was, I think, an admission by the U.S. Air Force that its much touted precision daylight bombing was not an unqualified success in every case. Earlier in the war American Bombardiers had bragged that they could "hit a pickle barrel from 25,000 feet". While it is true that our Sperry and, especially, our Norden computing bombsights were far superior to any other bombsight in use at the time, the pickle barrel boast was something of an overstatement. Under ideal training conditions in Utah or Arizona, with little wind and clear skies, one might not have been wise to sit on that pickle barrel. But over Vienna, Weiner Neustadt or Schweinfurt with the sky blackened by flak bursts, with FW-190's and ME-109's screaming through the formations and with other B-24's and B-17's disintegrating or going down in flames, it was quite another matter. Under those stressful conditions it was asking very much of pilots to hold the level, true course from the I.P. to the A.P. which our bombsights required to null out the error rates. It took a very conscientious Bombardier to resist the temptation to drop early and call "Now let's get the hell out of here!" over the intercom. In short, there is a wide gulf between ultimate capability under ideal conditions and practical performance under combat conditions.

On 24 August, though it was still blistering hot, we received orders from our Executive Officer that we must have our tents winterized within the next week. It was also decided that we were to go to six men per tent, rather than eight. Since I was one of the last to join the tent-group I was in at that time, I and five other fellows in the same situation got together to form a new tent-group. The next day we drew a new tent from supply, cleared a patch of ground and erected it using some nice 4 X 4's which we "requisitioned" from the officers'

latrine in the dark of night, as corner posts. The next day we started laying a floor with wood from frag bomb boxes and moved in that night. Though it continued to be very hot we went ahead with boarding up the sides of the tent, since September was nearly upon us and we knew cold weather was coming soon. To gain more room inside the tent we erected a rectangular framework to eliminate the center pole. I computed the frame lengths and angles by simple geometry and the other guys were amazed when every piece fit perfectly.

The Russians captured Bucharest the end of the month and thus another of our former targets was gone. Increasingly, we were called upon to bomb bridges and viaducts in northern Italy to impede the movement of German forces. It always seemed to me that this was a terrible waste of strategic bomber capabilities. In the first place such targets are very difficult to hit by horizontal bombing and the results often confirmed that. Secondly, one must question the potential risk of losing heavy bombers on an installation which is a natural target for dive or fighter bombers.

On 2 September we had a group practice formation at Headquarters in preparation for the formal presentation of our first two Distinguished Unit Citations. We marched to Headquarters then went through a "pass in review" ceremony three times and then marched back to the Squadron area. It was very hot and dusty and when we got back we were black with dirt and our uniforms were filthy. The formal ceremony took place on 3 September. General Nathan Twining arrived at 1300 for the presentation, which went off quite well.

That same day we were supposed to bomb another bridge in Jugoslavia, but after only three planes had lifted off, # 679, a new plane on her first mission, nosed over and blew up at the end of the runway, blocking all further take-offs that day.

The next day was one of the worst we had that summer, in terms of weather. Gale winds blew all day, turning up huge clouds of heavy, choking dust which got into our food, covered our blankets in the tents and even sifted into the planes, in spite of our having closed them tightly and covered all the turrets and guns.

A very strange sequence of events started on 7 September. That afternoon we were ordered to prepare for a poison gas mission. We were told only that the planes would be leaving the field for at least one week and would operate during that period from another country. The rumor was that the country was Russia, though we were never told that. We had always known that our local bomb dump contained a supply of bombs which were filled with Lewisite gas, a very potent nerve gas. Our Chemical Warfare men were required to check these bombs periodically to check against any possible leakage. That afternoon they were ordered to prepare those bombs for delivery to the field. I do not know the size of the bombs, as I never saw one, but I think I recall being told they were about 500 pounds.

I was one of the armorers who were ordered to accompany the planes. We each drew seven day's worth of K and C rations from supply and had our gas masks and protective clothing thoroughly checked by the Chemical

Warfare men. That protective clothing included specially impregnated long johns, gloves and socks which we had been issued before leaving the States. The stuff was awful - it smelled like a dead billy goat and many of the fellows had thrown theirs away or sold it to the Arabs in Africa. Like a good soldier, I had kept mine in the bottom of my duffel bag, wrapped in a piece of plastic. All this activity came to naught when the mission was called off that night just as we were waiting for the bombs to be moved to the planes from the dump. We were never told anything more about this proposed mission. I have often speculated since, whether the Allies had learned, through Ultra, that Hitler was considering using poison gas against the Russians and were prepared in that event to retaliate. I would still like to know!

This strange, cancelled mission was similar to another which I did not even know about at the time. I only learned of it from Jack Garrison in the winter of '83 when he visited me. Jack tells me that on or about 13 February '44 the aircrews were briefed on a scheduled mission to bomb the V-1 installations at Peenemunde. Since the target was so far from our field, the planes would not be able to return to Italy after the mission. After dropping their bombs, each pilot was to be on his own to land his plane wherever he could, preferably England, but even in Russia or neutral Sweden, if necessary. This mission, too, was cancelled before the planes were loaded. The ground crews never had knowledge of this particular briefing. It seems very strange to me that the 15th Air Force would actually plan such a mission, which would undoubtedly result in the loss of many B-24's and crews, when Peenemunde was such a natural target for the 8th Air Force.

On 8 September we actually did initiate a series of unusual missions. That day our engineers loaded twelve 55 gallon drums of gasoline in the waist of each of our planes. We, in turn, were ordered to remove the bomb hoists, all guns and the ammunition from the ball, waist and tail positions to reduce weight. What was going on we wondered? Once again the rumor mill had it that we would be moving somewhere, probably France. All the next day we continued to speculate while the planes remained on the ground and nothing happened. They lowered the boom on us that night. After we had all gone to bed, at 23:30, we were called out and told that we had to remove the Sperry ball turrets from nine of our planes and, in addition, load them each with twelve 500 pound bombs! A typical military snafu! Here we could have done that work during the day, while it was light and we were idle, but, instead, we had to do it in the dark of night!

None of us had ever removed a ball turret before, so we had to devise the procedure as we went along. There were, of course, no lights at the revetments so we had only the internal lights of the plane to work by. Each B-24 had its own 24 volt auxiliary generator aboard, located just forward of the bomb bay on the port side. It was a regulated generator driven by a small, single cylinder gasoline engine, much like a lawn mower engine, and probably made by Briggs & Stratton. We always called it the "Put-Put". When operating, it powered all the aircraft electrical systems and we used the Put-Put for lights at night, to avoid draining the plane's batteries.

We very quickly found that we could not remove the turrets once they were mechanically and electrically disconnected because of the low clearance between the plane and the ground. We then had to call out the Crew Chiefs and mechanics to get large hydraulic jacks with which to jack up the tails of the planes in order to lower and remove the turrets. Our entire Armament Section was out that night, working in teams of two, and somehow we finished the job, including loading the bombs, by 0630.

That next day, the 10th, the planes still did not fly and we removed guns, ammo and ball turrets from two additional planes. On the 11th the planes took the load of bombs and gasoline to an airfield near Lyons, France. It seemed we were doing ferry service, supplying the Tactical Air Force in France to make up for a serious supply shortage. Overall, we completed eight such supply missions to Bron Airdrome near Lyons, the last on 22 September. Before the supply missions were over we received some bomb bay gasoline tanks which allowed some of the planes to carry far more gasoline per trip. On the 12th the French field was closed in and some idiot in operations scheduled a practice gunnery mission instead. After we re-installed the guns and ammo on several of our planes, they called it off and we had to once again remove the guns and ammo! I sometimes wonder how we won the war with such utter fools in positions of authority.

On 15 September we changed from British Double Summer Time back to Greenwich Mean Time.

We received two new planes on 20 September with completely redesigned waist gun positions. Each gun was mounted through a flexible mount in the fuselage so the waist gunners no longer had to fire through the open windows. In addition, the old ring-and-post iron sights were replaced with new compensating optical sights. The sight reticle was driven in azimuth and elevation by flexible cables so as to automatically compensate for gun motion as the gunner tracked his target. It was a significant improvement in armament and the same sort of compensating sights were installed in the nose and upper turrets.

On 23 September we re-installed all the ball turrets and, after supper, put the guns and ammo back in. We were back in the bomber business once again! We flew missions to an airdrome and sub-pens in Greece on the 24th and 25th but were grounded the rest of the month because of weather. On the 27th we loaded 2000 pound bombs again. This time it went much easier after our first experience, but, because of the weather, the mission was cancelled for several days and we finally had to unload them and remove the racks on 2 October.

Whenever the field or target was weathered in and we had little to do, we could play softball or horseshoes for relaxation. In the evenings there were the inevitable card games and the movies at Group Headquarters to use up the idle hours. In my own spare time I wrote a lot of short letters, using V-Mail, and also did a lot of reading. I had obtained several Army training manuals on mathematics and physics which I studied whenever I wasn't too weary. We also had our E.M. Club building where we could buy wine by the glass. Sometimes brandy was available but we never had beer or hard liquor.

As October arrived the weather turned much colder and we knew winter was upon us. We had not yet constructed a stove for our new tent and we were cold at night, even sleeping under four blankets. It was the coldest we had been for a long while. The high winds made it even worse. On 2 October we were issued our wool O.D. uniforms and about ten days later we received our new Eisenhower jackets and G.I. wool sweaters. The new short jackets replaced the old wool blouses we formerly had and were much more comfortable and better looking.

We started flying a number of split missions where two Squadrons would bomb one target and the other two would hit another. It was clear that we were beginning to run out of strategic targets, though there were still many missions to Germany and Austria. During the latter half of '44 we started dropping "chaff", sometimes codenamed "window", on the way to those targets to confuse German radar, which had improved considerably during the year. Chaff was simply bundles of aluminum foil cut into narrow strips, perhaps 1/16th inch wide by 18" long. It looked very much like the tinsel used to decorate Christmas trees and was dispensed by hand through special chutes which had been mounted in the waist area of each plane. We also dropped quite a number of leaflet bombs over Germany towards the latter part of the year. These were canisters which contained a large quantity of propaganda leaflets that urged German citizens to recognize they were losing the War and to surrender while they could. These leaflets scattered over a wide area when they were ejected by an explosive charge.

On 13 October we bombed Vienna and received heavy flak, as usual. Our Squadron lost two planes, with another missing but presumed down at an emergency field. Another ship made a belly landing when the pilot could not lower his gear and flaps. The next day, on a mission to an oil refinery near Blechhammer, # 947 was badly hit over the target and its crew bailed out. It was the new plane's first mission! Another plane, # 952, made an emergency landing on an island off Yugoslavia. On the 16th, while taking off on a mission to Linz, the number one turbo on plane # 198 ran away, causing the propeller to spin off and cut a main landing gear strut. The plane crashed just off the runway and was a total loss. We later removed all the equipment we could salvage and the Service Squadron towed it away.

On 18 October I received a new plane to replace my previous plane which had been transferred. It was # 941 and had the new waist guns plus another change - external ammo boxes and chutes for the ball turret. As usual, I had to spend full time for a couple days getting it ready for combat. From this point in time I can only refer to most of our planes by tail number. The replacement crews very seldom gave their ships names of any sort and somehow the planes had lost their previous identity and character. There would be no more Three Feathers, Flabbergasted Fannys, Ice Cold Katies or Big Moguls. The war had become even more impersonal.

By the end of October we had finished building a new stove for our tent and were ready for most anything Italy had to offer in the way of cold weather. On the 25th we received a new bomb to load, one we had not encountered before, a 500 pound incendiary. After being grounded for three days the planes were unable to locate their target because

of clouds on the 29th and returned to the field with full bomb loads. We finally had to take those big incendiaries off and replace them with 500 pound RDX bombs.

The first week of November, surprisingly, brought us warm, spring-like weather for a few days. On the first we bombed Vienna, with its massed flak batteries. "The Bad Penny", # 321, went down over the target and # 623 had to make a forced landing at Foggia. Most of our planes were grounded on the second so we took advantage of the free time to haul several weapons carrier loads of gravel from the creek to make a winter-proof walkway for our tent. That evening five radar planes left for an after dark raid on Vienna. The night of 3 November we again loaded those 500 pound incendiaries which were dropped the following day on a marshalling yard in Germany.

I began to receive the first of my Christmas packages during the first week of November and most of the goodies were eaten as they arrived.

On 7 November our planes went on what was supposed to be a milk run to a marshalling yard near Sarajevo. Instead, they ran into heavy flak. The tail gunner on # 055 was badly wounded, # 045 landed on an island off Yugoslavia and # 585 had to go to the 60th Service Squadron for major repair work.

On the eighth we heard the great news that F.D.R. had been re-elected. Most soldiers had the highest respect for Roosevelt and there was general rejoicing at his re-election.

On 9 November the weather turned very cold again and by the 11th all of the surrounding mountaintops were covered with snow. The bad weather grounded us for four days and as a result we flew several practice missions with the usual loading and unloading of bombs and ammunition. When the weather cleared we bombed marshalling yards at Munich on the 16th. We lost # 623 that day when a bomb from a plane above fell right through her wing. It was the sort of thing that seemed to happen all too often with the new crews!

After we had another frag bomb mission we started to put up a second, double side wall on our tent for additional insulation. Our tents were rapidly becoming small wooden huts with canvas roofs.

On 20 November we bombed an oil refinery at Blechhammer and were mauled badly again. We lost # 952 over the target, # 662 cracked up while attempting an emergency landing at Foggia Main, # 630 nosed in while landing and was put in Class 26 and # 677 also had a bad landing but was thought to be repairable. It was a rough day at Blechhammer!

By the 21st the weather had turned rainy and within a few days we were living in a world of mud. We bombed Munich by radar on the 22nd, through a heavy overcast. The 23rd was Thanksgiving and our cooks did themselves proud with a great meal served at 1530. The Army had flown in frozen turkeys and there was more than enough to go around. We even had seconds on some things. It was our first fresh meat since Christmas at Oran and a much better meal. I still remember it with pleasure.

On 26 November we loaded 500 pound bombs which incorporated the "booby" fuzes which I described earlier. Every other plane also carried a leaflet bomb which was filled with leaflets warning civilians about the delayed action fuzes and the danger of trying to remove them. For the next five days our planes were grounded by cold, rainy and overcast weather. We were booby-trapped by our own bombs! Because the bomb loads could not be safed by removing the fuzes, we had to mount an around-the-clock armed guard on every plane. Everyone, up to and including the rank of buck sergeant, had to serve on 12 hour guard shifts every other day or so. The weather was miserable with intermittent cold rain and mud, mud, mud. Finally, on 2 December, we got off a mission and they unloaded those infernal bombs on the oil refinery at Blechhammer. In spite of the bad weather, we flew 19 missions in November and the same number the following month.

On 3 December we had a bit of a party at our E.M. club to celebrate the anniversary of boarding ship at Newport News. Any excuse for a party! I left early when I saw it was turning into a drunken brawl. On 5 December our bomb load was six 500 pounders per plane. This unusually light load meant a very long mission, but whatever it was it was cancelled, as we were called out at midnight to load four more bombs on each plane.

During the nights of 6 and 7 December one of our newest radar planes, # 055, went on a secret mission, leaving at about 0230. We were never told the targets for such solo missions. On the night of the 9th we again loaded bombs equipped with booby fuzes, as well as the usual leaflet bombs. The next day, when the bombardiers couldn't find the target through the overcast, they salvoed those bombs into the Adriatic Sea rather than bring them home. After another attack on Vienna on the 11th, # 585 was lost, and both 613 and 677 were badly damaged and landed at emergency fields.

We bombed the oil refineries near Blechhammer three days in a row, 17, 18 & 19 December. On the first raid # 045 and # 941 collided in mid-air over the target and went down in flames. The next day we lost # 626, and that night our Squadron had only three aircraft capable of flying on the mission the following day.

On the 19th and 20th we received two new "L" model planes to replace some of our losses. These new planes had completely redesigned tail turrets with much better gunsights and smoother controls.

The weather continued cold, often wet, and always miserable. A Christmas eve party in the E.M. club turned into another drunken brawl and a number of us went back to our tents to sing carols. We bombed even on Christmas Day, with our target being the Wels, Austria marshalling yards. On the 26th we bombed an oil refinery in Poland, the deepest our Group had ever penetrated Festung Europa. My brand new plane, on its second mission, was lost over the target.

By this time, late in the month, the weather had cleared and was beautiful for several days, with clear blue skies. But on the last day of the year we received a heavy snow. New Year's Eve brought another party at the E.M. club, with lots of ammunition and flares expended!

YEAR OF VICTORY

The year 1945 arrived with bitter cold weather and three inches of snow on the ground. We had a turkey dinner on New Years Day but I missed it because I was working on my plane and lost track of the time. January was to become the nadir of our overseas duty. It was a month of frustration, disappointment and sheer boredom. The problem was the awful Italian winter weather. For most of our scheduled combat missions either the target or our field was socked in. As a consequence, we flew a total of only eight missions during the entire month, most of them against marshalling yards and oil refineries in Austria.

When a mission was cancelled, as was the case most of the time, our Operations people would immediately schedule some sort of practice mission. That meant that we armorers had to go out and drop the bombs we had just loaded the night before. Then, more often than not, the practice mission was scrubbed and that night we had to re-load the same bombs once again. This happened day after day and we became very angry and frustrated about it because there was nothing we could do but follow the orders, however stupid. To be sure, the new crews needed all the practice they could get, but the way things actually worked out only the armorers were getting the practice and we sure as hell didn't need any more experience loading and unloading 500 pound bombs! I wrote in my diary that I was ready to ship out to the Pacific Theater any day the Air Force wanted me to go!.

On 8 January I observed that when our planes returned from a mission to Linz, Austria they were covered with a heavy coating of frost from the -60 F they experienced at bombing altitude. I had never seen that before. On the 12th I received a new plane, # 456. This became the only plane in our Squadron to be given a name by her crew during the previous six months. She was named "Sad Sack". I spent the next three days getting all the armament ready for operations. Sad Sack was to be the last B-24 to which I was assigned - she lasted till the end of the War. On 15 January we lost one of our radar planes when # 055 crashed into a mountain killing the entire crew. Ironically, the plane was on a practice flight and I suppose the radar scanner was designed to look down at targets, rather than ahead.

For most of the month the weather remained uncomfortably cold and we received alternating snow and rain which turned the roads and tent areas into seas of mud. Though we knew what to expect in the winter, and had tried to prepare for the worst, we were still pretty miserable most of the time.

February brought much better, and warmer weather as well as the good news that the Russians were only 45 miles from Berlin. We made up for January with a vengeance and flew a total of 26 missions in February, the greatest monthly total which we achieved during our service in the 15th Air Force. Most of our targets continued to be marshalling yards and oil refineries in Austria, with a smattering of other targets in Germany and Yugoslavia. On the 24th we flew our 200th combat mission.

When the planes returned from Klagenfurt most of the ground crew were formed up near the control tower in a big "200" formation. We held pieces of white cloth or paper over our heads so that the returning air crews could see the number.

On the second of March we flew our 18th consecutive combat mission and by that time none of us were bored from inactivity! We flew a total of 23 missions in March, all but six of them to targets in Austria. It was beginning to look like there were no targets left in Germany. However, even though the Luftwaffe was pretty well out of business, they were still able to put up formidable flak over most targets, especially places like Vienna, Linz, Wels, Weiner Neustadt and Moosbierbaum. On the 23rd we had four planes (including mine) so badly shot up over Vienna that all had to be sent to the 60th Service Squadron for major repairs.

The weather in March was unsettled, as usual, with temperatures ranging from quite chilly to very warm. By the end of the month most of the cold, wet weather was over.

On 13 and 14 March we had marching practice in preparation for the formal presentation of our third Distinguished Unit Citation. About the same time I started to put together a crystal radio set from scrounged parts and a crystal my parents had sent to me. I fiddled with it most of the month in my spare time. Sometimes I received a weak signal from the Armed Forces radio station, but mostly I got just static.

On 2 April we had the formal ceremony at Group Headquarters for presentation of our third D.U.C. (for Markersdorf A/D, Vienna on 23 August '44) by Gen. Twining. Formalities such as this were the exception, rather than the rule, overseas. Generally we lived a life of military informality. On our field we always dressed in fatigues or work coveralls, except when on Guard Duty, where Class A uniform was required. Officers were always treated with the usual courtesy but there was a sort of general understanding that we didn't bother saluting any officer under the rank of Major, except when reporting on specific orders. Even more informality applied to non-commissioned officers. Master-, Technical-, and Staff-Sergeants ("first three graders") worked right along with Privates and Corporals. We mostly thought of ourselves as simply mechanics, armorers, radiomen or whatever and we worked together in harmony, for the most part. Those of us in the lower ranks naturally did what the N.C.O.'s asked us to do, but there was no big deal about it - we didn't quaver in our boots or "snap to". I am sure it was a much different experience from that of the Infantry, for example. When we went to one of the Italian towns we wore class A uniforms, but without ties, when on pass, or fatigues when on some sort of detail. When on pass we saluted all officers, including all foreign officers, as a matter of ordinary military courtesy.

On 5 April we received what was to be our last new B-24. It was # 885, an "M" model, indicating how many major changes that bomber went through during the course of the War, recalling that the first B-24's to fly combat as operational bombers were "D" models.

In early April our Group was ordered to do no more radar bombing over Austrian targets. From then on visibility had to be perfect before bombs could be dropped. Apparently, friendly ground troops were closing in on many of our targets and the Air Force was taking no chances on some sort of "incident".

On 13 april we were all shocked to learn of the death of F.D.R. For many of us he was the only President we had known, since we didn't really count Hoover. He seemed like a permanent National fixture and we couldn't believe he was gone. Mixed with our grief was a great concern over what sort of President Mr. Truman would make. We knew virtually nothing about him and we were afraid he was of the usual Vice Presidential calibre. We truly felt a terrible void that day.

The weather continued to get warmer and by the latter part of the month we were once again having dust storms.

We flew 24 combat missions in April, of which 18 were to targets in northern Italy in support of the Eighth and Fifth Armies. The targets were mostly highway and railway bridges in an effort to impede the withdrawal of Kesselring's forces. As noted previously, these were poor targets to assign to heavy bombers and it was a sure sign that our usefulness, in a strategic sense, had about run its course. On the 24th my plane somehow ran short of fuel on one of these missions and the pilot made a forced landing in what was not much more than a cow pasture north of Pescara. That afternoon the crew chief and I flew up in the new plane, # 885, and landed at a nearby airfield. There we were met by an Army truck which had several drums of aviation fuel aboard. We drove to the emergency landing site and could scarcely believe that the pilot had been able to land on such a small field. While the pilot and crew chief transferred the fuel to the plane, I removed most of the ammunition and eight of the machine guns to reduce weight. The guns, ammo and empty drums were put on the truck and sent back to be loaded on 885, which then flew back to our field.

The three of us, pilot, crew chief and I, walked the full length of the field and back, removing some rocks and a couple logs and looking for any holes or ditches. We found one depression which we marked with a stick and cloth flag. The crew chief helped the pilot start the engines of our plane and then acted as Co-Pilot as I guided them while they taxied to the very end of the field and turned into the wind. I climbed aboard and the bomb bay doors were closed. While almost standing on the brakes the pilot opened all four throttles, then started his takeoff run.

I sat on a jump seat just behind the cockpit and watched as the trees at the far end of the pasture seemed to race towards us. The field was very rough and the landing gear rumbled and shuddered. I was not sure we would make it and for an awful moment wished I had returned on 885. Then, at what must have been the last moment, the heavy vibration ended and we were airborne. I felt one last tremor then saw the ground dropping away from us. We landed at our home field just as the sun was setting. After the plane was parked in its revetment and we had gotten out, we saw what had caused that final tremor. There were tree leaves snagged on one of the main landing gears!

On 25 April we bombed the marshalling yards at Linz and on the following day we hit additional marshalling yards near Sachsenburg, Austria. Though we did not know it at the time, that was to be the last combat mission of the 451st Bombardment Group. That same day we were told we would have a P.O.M. inspection within two weeks. After forty years I cannot remember what P.O.M. stood for but it was a special sort of inspection which was always conducted just before any outfit moved to another location, so we knew a move was coming. At first most of us believed we would be transferred directly to the Pacific Theater. We had all of our personal papers and records reviewed on the 27th and on the following day we had an inspection of all clothing and equipment.

Heavy rains returned on the 28th and 29th and while confined to our tents by the weather I began to sort through all of my things, throwing away anything I didn't want to keep and separating those things I would mail home, rather than carry on my back.

On 30 April we loaded 1000 pound bombs on 12 planes, but removed them the following day when the mission was cancelled. We received news on the first of May of Hitler's suicide and we knew the end had come! On the second of May, to our surprise, we were again ordered to load 1000 pound bombs on 12 planes, but once more the mission was cancelled when we learned that all German troops in northern Italy had surrendered. Those were the last live bombs I handled or saw in World War II.

On 4 May we heard that all German forces on the Western Front had surrendered and on the 7th Admiral Donitz surrendered unconditionally. During this period our planes continued to fly practice gunnery missions. We all had physical examinations on 7 May. The 8th of May was VE Day and our C.O., Maj. McKinnis, spoke to the entire assembled Squadron. We turned in all of our personal arms that day, perhaps for concern that someone would be accidentally shot by a drunken celebrator after the War was over.

On the 9th of May we began to get our planes ready to leave. We removed all the ammunition except for 100 rounds per gun and put a coating of heavy oil on all guns. Two days later we were ordered to remove all the remaining ammo. All the tools and equipment in our armament shop were cleaned, oiled and packed in crates. The rumor started to circulate that we would be going home!

Four of our older planes, 860, 497, 465 and 176 left the field on 12 May - we were not told their destination. I began to ship packages home and was getting bored from the uncertainty and inactivity. The formal P.O.M. inspection was held at Group H.Q. on 14 May and two days later we received official word that we would be returning to the States. A rumor circulated that we were going to a base in New Hampshire to be assigned to the Air Transport Command. I thought that was pretty silly, but it turned out to be fairly accurate. Incredibly, on 17 May we received four brand new B-24's to replace the first four which had left! What on earth were we to do with them? I suppose the pipeline was full of replacement planes and there was nothing for the Air Force to do but make the deliveries which had been planned.

The weather was very hot and dusty by now. For lack of anything else to do, I re-packed my bags for the third time on the 18th. On 21 May we started to tear up the walls and floors of our tents. I took one final pass to Foggia on the 22nd where I sold several cartons of cigarettes for 1500 lire each. Since I didn't smoke I usually traded my monthly quota of cigarettes to other fellows for candy, etc. or sold them in town.

We were placed on a 72 hour shipping alert on 23 May. We finished tearing up all the woodwork in the tents and hauled all the scrap lumber to the supply building. Then we took down all the tents and turned them in. By this time our Italian laborers had constructed several stone buildings around our Squadron area. There were the Officers' and E.M. club buildings, a maintenance garage, a supply building, engineering and armament shops and similar structures. These buildings now became crowded sleeping quarters for the next three nights. I slept in the garage with other armorers.

We were each advised of our individual Reassignment Centers on 24 May. Mine was Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Our barracks and duffel bags were stenciled with our shipment number - 22046-C. That afternoon all of our special vehicles, such as wreckers, weapons carriers, and tankers left for Caserta. By the 25th we had finished all packing and we were ordered to thoroughly police our entire Squadron area. Naturally, the enlisted men also had to clean up the officers' area, which was the worst mess of all! Everything, and I mean every stick and piece of trash, was picked up and hauled to a dump. If our base was any example, the American forces left no mess behind them in Italy and I think that is something to be proud of. All we left behind us were the buildings, which I am sure were put to some good use by the local people.

We left our field at Castelluccio by truck convoy at 1030 on 26 May. We traveled to Bagnoli via Ariano, Benevento, Caserta and Napoli. At every rest stop along the way we were immediately surrounded by a mob of kids in tattered clothing to whom we threw most of our candy and gum. They would surely miss the rich G.I.'s. We arrived at the same camouflaged orphanage complex which we had first been assigned to 18 months before. But what an incredible change! The buildings looked about the same on the outside, except for the new windows, but inside they had undergone a complete metamorphosis. During the intervening months the Army had installed modern latrines, showers and double bunks, as well as a kitchen and mess hall.

On 27 May we had to make out full customs declarations, listing everything we were carrying back to the states. There could be no finer example of federal bureaucracy run amuck! Most of us spent whatever spare time we had at Bagnoli at the nearby Red Cross Service Club where we could actually buy ice cream, get our hair cut, boots shined, etc. We learned that the Empress of Britain and another large troop transport pulled into Napoli harbor on the 28th, and wondered if either transport was ours.

On the 29th, while at the Service Club, I won a drawing which entitled me to a free guided tour of Pompeii that afternoon. Naturally, I

jumped at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and spent a great afternoon entranced by the sights of this historic Roman ruin. I used up most of the film I had left for my camera. On both the 30th and 31st I and some other fellows took passes into Napoli to see the city and harbor. The city was quite dirty and still showed signs of bombing as compared with Rome, which was comparatively clean and undamaged. There was nothing at all to purchase. Most shops were closed except for places that offered service only.

We were placed on 48 hour shipping alert on 1 June. We had to turn in all of our Lire (invasion currency, as well as any Italian money) for which we received only a credit slip for the equivalent amount in U.S. Dollars. From then on we had no money with which to buy even a candy bar. We finished packing on the second, but our shipping orders were cancelled. Finally, on 4 June, my birthday, we were roused out at 0430, had breakfast, finished our packs and blanket rolls, and were shipped by truck to the wharf area at Napoli. Our troopship was the U.S.S. General Meigs, a two-stacker which was loaded with 6000 troops, mostly 15th Air Force and Fifth Army. We weighed anchor and moved out of the harbor at 1600, having a wonderful final view of incomparable Vesuvius.

I have often been surprised at the number of significant events of World War II which occurred on my birthday, in addition to leaving Italy for home:

1940 - Dunkirk fell to Germans. Churchill gave his famous, "We shall fight on the beaches -- we shall never surrender" speech.
1941 - Kaiser Wilhelm II died in Holland
1942 - Battle of Midway
1944 - Rome fell to Allies. "Overlord" convoys left ports in Britain for invasion of Normandy, but were recalled because of worsening weather conditions.

We were assigned to hold A403L of the General Meigs, which was three decks down. The ventilation was poor and it was usually hot and stuffy as well as very crowded. Our meals aboard were generally very good but the chow lines were terribly long. I could not stay on deck at night, as I had on the way to Africa, since everyone was ordered below decks at 2100 each night. The ship traveled at a fast 22 knots and it seemed strange to have no escort and to see our lights blazing at night. We passed Gibraltar at about 2030 the night of 6 June.

The passage home was generally uneventful, even boring at times. From the moment we cleared Napoli harbor until we reached the States, continuous high-stakes poker and blackjack games ran in our hold. I mean they were going night and day. Players came and went but the games never stopped. I didn't play, as they were often betting $ 50 to $ 100 on a card, but I often watched in amazement. Since we had no cash they were playing with I.O.U.'s and guys clutched handfuls of slips of paper with various amounts of money with names written on them. One of our armorers, a fellow from Tennessee, had won over $ 5000 in the first three days. We all urged him to quit and take his winnings, as I am sure it was more money than he had ever seen or heard of before. However, he was hung up on it and by the time we reached the States he

had lost every cent of that and was several hundred dollars in debt. I have often wondered how many of those I.O.U.'s were actually paid off.

The General Meigs had 4" and 5" guns and the Navy gun crews test fired them on three different days. I did not understand why, but I suppose there might have been a German sub out there somewhere which had not gotten the word. The deck guards on the ship were Marines, rather than Army M.P.'s and they were all obviously fresh out of boot camp. One day several of us were standing by the rail amidships when one of the Marine guards, who was particularly impressed by his own assumed importance, ordered us to move forward, away from that area. Two of the fellows in our group were tough old Master-Sergeant crew chiefs, one of whom asked, "What did you say sonny?". The Marine repeated his order and when asked why we should leave he said the area was off limits to soldiers. Someone pointed out there was no "Off Limits" sign anywhere, at which point the Marine started cussing and waving his billy club in the air. One of the Sergeants said, "That does it buddy, over you go!". With that, the two Sergeants each grabbed an arm and a leg and held the Marine spread-eagle face down. Someone else threw his billy overboard, then the Sergeants started counting as they swung the Marine's body back and forth over the rail. The Marine started screaming something and at the count of "three" the Sergeants swung him well out over the rail. I thought for a moment they might actually lose him but they then dumped him in a heap on the deck. The Marine jumped up and dashed down the deck and entered a companionway. We never saw him the rest of the voyage and from that day on we never saw another Marine guard on our deck. When we did see them they were always standing somewhere up on the superstructure.

The weather during the trip varied from hot, sunny days, with the sea almost as calm as a lake, to cold, rainy days with a high chop. The sea was never as rough as we had experienced it on the way to Africa and the big trooper was, of course, much more stable than our Liberty ship had been. In spite of that many men again got seasick as soon as we hit open water and remained so for the entire trip.

On 12 June we sighted our first seaweed and gulls. The next day there were many more gulls and we started packing our gear. On the morning of the 14th we were on deck early to watch for land. About 1030 we sighted the coast of Virginia on the horizon. We had been told we would land at Newport News. A Navy blimp and several aircraft escorted us into the harbor. Everyone had to go below decks while the ship docked. I suppose this was to get the G.I.'s out of the way of the sailors while they were mooring the ship. Afterwards we went up on deck and stood at the rail all afternoon watching real automobiles and whistling at any girl who walked within sight. We had dinner on board then everyone had to go to assigned holds while the unloading process began. The hold was very hot and crowded and our uniforms were wringing wet with perspiration by the time our turn came. It is a wonder some of us didn't pass out from heat exhaustion in that hold.

We got on a train and left for Camp Patrick Henry about 2100. There were many people along the way who waved at us, even at that time of day. We had a welcoming speech by the Camp Commander and then were given the best meal I ever had in the Army. I remember only a very

good steak and all the fresh milk I could drink. I must have drunk at least a quart and a half. We were waited on by German P.O.W.'s, with whom we were not supposed to talk. I did, however, carry on a limited (part German, part English) conversation with the fellow who waited on our table. His name was Werner, I remember, and he was from small village in Bavaria. He had served in the Afrika Korps and was captured near Bizerte. He was very concerned about his family, having had no word from them in over two years.

On 15 June I was issued two new uniforms and new underwear and, after waiting around all day, left by train for Indiana at 2030. The train was the typical dirty, smoky trooptrain with no sleepers. After our fine welcome at Camp Patrick Henry, we had hoped the Army might find a better train for us! We arrived at Camp Atterbury the morning of the 17th and spent all afternoon being "processed", as the Army called it, and were issued two more new uniforms.

This was strictly an Army camp and whenever the troops were expected to do anything, eat, fall out, get up, etc., they blew a bugle over the P.A. system. We hadn't the foggiest notion what all those bugle calls meant so we just lay around in the barracks waiting for something to happen. As a result, we missed several formations the very first day. Finally, in exasperation, some buck Sergeant came into the barracks to find out why we hadn't done this or that. One of our Tech-Sergeants looked up from his cot and said, "Look, fellow, we're Air Force and we only answer to whistles, not your goddamned bugle! When you want us to do something knock on the door, or blow a whistle and tell us what the hell you want!". And it worked! From then on some Corporal always came to the barracks to get us for meals, processing or other duties.

I managed to get all my insignia sewed on my new uniforms, received my back pay from Italy, had my papers all checked and then, on the 18th, was issued my 30 day furlough papers and R.R. ticket home. I took a bus to Indianapolis where I had to spend the night at a hotel, since I missed the last train to Columbus. After changing trains in Columbus and departing in the middle of the night, I finally arrived in Barnesville at 0500 on 20 June. I had not told my parents I was coming home so I caught a taxi to the house.

The first thing I did was open the back door to let out our old Fox Terrier, Jerry. He was so excited to see me again that he couldn't control himself and urinated all over my pantleg. And then I awakened Mother and Dad. I was home from the War.

EPILOGUE

My thirty-day overseas leave passed quickly. It was great to be home but in a way it all seemed very strange. I found that I couldn't sleep on my old bed at all. I finally put a couple quilts and blankets on the floor for padding and slept there, much to Mother's consternation. In Barnesville I visited with friends and relatives and went to see several of my high school teachers, as well as the Principal, Mr. Shepherd. I also met several of my classmates, recently returned from service, and found we had much more in common to talk about than had been the case in school. Barbara came down on the train from Cleveland, where she had a job as a secretary. My Aunt Esther also came down from Cleveland, traveling by bus. We had a couple picnics at nearby lakes and after all the visiting was done Mother, Essie, Barb and I drove to Cleveland to visit with all my friends and relatives in northern Ohio.

On the Fourth of July we went to the "Festival of Freedom" at the Stadium where 82,000 people cheered the program and fireworks display. We also went to the amusement park at Euclid Beach one day. We stayed at Essie's apartment while we visited around Cleveland and then on 11 July Mother and I returned home. Finally, on 19 July my leave time was up and I caught the train back to Camp Atterbury, where I arrived at 1530 on the 20th.

On 21 July I found my name on shipping orders for Maine, to leave the following day. On the 22nd G.I. buses took us to Indianapolis where we boarded a troop sleeper (bunks slung along the sides of a converted coach) at 1900. Our route took us through Pittsburg, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Trenton and New York. At New Haven we connected with other men from the Group who came up from southern states. We finally arrived at Dow Field, near Bangor, Maine at 1030 on the 24th.

We were told that we would be "screened" at Dow for reassignment. However, Dow Field was an Air Transport Command field and we all were completely dumfounded as to why an experienced Heavy Bombardment Group would be sent to such a place. The War, so far as we knew at that time, was far from over, as Japan was still not defeated. I felt, and I know many of my buddies felt likewise, that we should be receiving transition training on B-29's so that we could do some useful service in the Pacific Theater and help finish the damned War. I was personally ready to go whenever the Air Force could cut my orders. Just what the hell were we doing at a lousy A.T.C. base, anyway??

Of course, we were never given an answer to that question. For the next five days we had absolutely nothing to do, not even any routine Army duty. We wondered if anyone knew we had arrived, even though our Group got a great write-up in the local newspaper. To while away the time we went to the P.X. and the base theater. The town of Bangor seemed completely dead to us, as there was just nothing to do. We walked around the field to look at the transports, but they were not interesting, like bombers. It was a deadly boring interval.

Finally, on 30 July, I had my "screening". Since A.T.C. was not looking for armorers, I was to be assigned either as a photographer or as a photo lab technician. That was fine with me, as long as I had to be part of that outfit. On the same day some of our guys, who had already been screened, were shipped to the field at Presque Isle. On the last day of July we had a 726th Squadron farewell party at a hotel in Bangor. There was a nice chicken dinner, several speeches and dancing later. Since I had never learned to dance, I left early, totally dejected by the final breakup of our Group. I thought it a very sad day.

I was placed on a shipping alert for Presque Isle on 1 August. I didn't particularly want to go there as it had the reputation of being a lousy base, but I was certainly tired of everything at Dow Field. I wanted to get back in a Bomb Group in the worst way, but I could get nowhere when I went to the Orderly Room to ask about re-assignment. It was painfully clear that the Air Force had nothing useful for us to do and was probably only marking time by shuffling us around.

On 3 August several of us hitch-hiked to nearby Green Lake to go swimming and boating. It was a pleasant change of scene.

The first nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on the sixth. I recall some of us sitting around talking about it, but strangely, I took no note of it in my diary. That is hard for me now to understand. I suppose, like most Americans, we really didn't realize the true significance of the event. We certainly did not comprehend that the anticipation of this awesome weapon was probably the reason the Air Force had decided no more Bomb Groups were needed in the Pacific.

On 8 August the second bomb fell on Nagasaki and on the same day I was shipped to Presque Isle by train. I heard the news after I arrived that afternoon. Clearly the War was almost over and we all knew it was only a matter of time before our Army service was concluded. I began to wonder what I would do. I had no clear idea of what I wanted to do, since I had not given the future much thought. Suddenly everything seemed uncertain and fuzzy. Though many, if not most, men hated the Army and couldn't wait to get home, I had found some aspects of Service rewarding and interesting. Now I was beginning to feel a little lost at the prospect of early discharge.

Though the nights were cool, the days at Presque Isle were surprisingly hot. The first day there I had nothing to do, but on the 10th I learned that I had been classified as a motion picture projectionist, of all things. It seems there were no photography positions open and that was the closest they could come!

I started my new job on 11 August. I quickly learned to operate the two 35mm Simplex projectors and how to switch from one to the other when the cue marks appeared on the screen. For a few days it was sort of fun but after a while the routine became pretty monotonous and I quickly tired I seeing and hearing the same movie a dozen times. My normal routine was to clean up the theater and clean and oil the machines from 0900 to 1030, then show the matinee from 1330 to 1600, and finally the evening shows from 1700 to 2130. The work was not at

all difficult and the hours were reasonable but the schedule broke up the day so badly that I scarcely had any time to myself.

The surrender of Japan came on the 14th and all of us were sort of taken aback that the War was over so much sooner than anyone had expected. I felt deprived to be stuck in a miserable place like Presque Isle, when all the action was in the large cities. There was just no celebration at all on our base. One would have thought that World Wars ended routinely every week or so! Once I went on pass to the town of Presque Isle but thought it such a crummy town that I never went back, though they did have a nice U.S.O.

By this time the Army had developed a "point system" for the orderly discharge of troops. I don't recall exactly how it worked, but a certain number of points were awarded for each Battle Star, for each medal earned, for total time of service and for overseas duty. It was supposed to be an equitable system, but like most Army efforts it didn't work out that way in many cases. Though I had never fired a gun in anger and had never been shot at, I probably had, with ten Battle Stars, three Distinguished Unit Citations and 18 months overseas, far more discharge points than any G.I. from the Fifth or Third Army. On 29 August I went through Pre-separation paperwork checks and on the first of September I packed my gear, said a rather sad farewell to my 726th Squadron buddies who were still at the base (none of whom have I seen since) and boarded a truck for the railway station, to be shipped to Camp Atterbury for discharge.

The troop train of day coaches left Presque Isle at 1745. We changed cars three times during the first day and finally ended up with Pullmans. We were routed via Albany, Cleveland and Columbus and finally reached Camp Atterbury at 2100 on 3 September. We started processing that same night with paperwork checks, and a "shakedown inspection" of our gear. The purpose of this was to check everything we had and to make us turn in any item which was not on the list of clothing we could take with us when released. I had suspected that this was coming and while marching to the inspection area I slipped out of line and tossed several items, such as my canteen, ammo belt, pack, and a couple other items into a culvert, from which I retrieved them later that night after the "shakedown". Unfortunately, my heavy overcoat and raincoat which I wanted to keep were in the bottom of my duffel bag and I just could not get them out. Sure enough, they were taken from me, a fact which still rankles, for all those items were later sold to surplus dealers for next to nothing.

We spent all of 4 September, until nearly midnight, going through separation processing. I shipped a duffel bag of my things home via R.R. Express during the afternoon. We took a final physical and were issued our new discharge clothing. Early the next morning I had my new uniforms altered and my discharge patch - known as the "Ruptured Duck" - sewn on my shirts. There was a final "shakedown", after I had sent my duffel home, and I received my final Army pay and discharge papers.

At 1500 on 5 September I caught a Greyhound bus for home from Indianapolis. About midnight the bus dropped me off at a highway junction

about six miles from home and I walked and hitch-hiked the rest of the way to our house, arriving at 0200 on the sixth of September.

I was home from the Army and the War for good. In many ways the months ahead were a difficult adjustment period. It was not easy to get used to a new, non-regimented routine. I felt strangely foolish in civilian clothes and wore my uniform for most of the 30 day period which was permitted for discharged veterans. I missed my buddies for a long period, as we had shared so many arduous hours and miserable conditions together. Everything seemed strange for many weeks.

I really did not yet know what I wanted to do with my life. My high school principal urged me to enter college right away under the G.I. Bill, but I was still uncertain just what I wanted to specialize in and I needed more time to think. So, at the request of the Lapperts, I once again began working at the studio in Barnesville, as a photographer and lab technician. Though the pay was not much, I enjoyed the work and I continued at it for nearly a year, living at home with Mother and Dad. Then, in the fall of 1946, I entered the College of Engineering at Ohio State University in Columbus and so embarked on another phase of my life.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

In looking back on my Army days after forty years, and especially after writing this personal history, I find myself more and more fascinated with that unique experience. While many of the events I saw and experienced still stand out in stark relief in my mind's eye, many other details seem to be lost in the dusty corridors of memory. I now regret that I did not record those experiences in greater depth in my diaries.

In retrospect I am certain that the Army did its best to care for the servicemen of World War II. Medical care was the best available at the time, consistent with field conditions. I never heard of a case of body lice, the bane of soldiers in all previous wars in history. Food, even in combat areas, was generally adequate and satisfying, even the much maligned K and C field rations. Equipment and weapons, almost without exception, were reliable and dependable and served us well. G.I.s loved to gripe and complain but overall they were better cared for by their government than any other soldiers in history up to that time. My only lasting gripe, after all these years, was the strict officer/enlisted man caste system. Though privilege of rank and discipline are necessary in any military organization, there is no justification for treating enlisted men as social and mental inferiors as was the policy of too many officers.

I have always been, and remain, proud that I was able to serve my country in time of need. During the nearly three years I was in the Army Air Forces I experienced periods of severe physical discomfort, long hours of very hard physical labor, countless examples of military snafus and inefficiencies, and even, at times, pangs of hunger. Yet, interspersed were equally memorable experiences of great pride and excitement, numerous examples of bravery and devotion to duty and stirring scenes which, unfortunately, only war can create. Overall, it was an experience I probably would not trade for any other I can think of, except, perhaps, a trip to Mars. Nor would I wish to go through it ever again!

With the benefit of hindsight one is often tempted to speculate on "what if?". I have often wondered where I would have ended up had I waited until after my high school graduation to enter the Army. There is the possibility, at least, that I might have ended face down in the sand on Omaha Beach. One can never know. Had I been more concerned about my future prospects, I suppose I should have applied for Officer Candidate School, as my interviewers at St. Petersburg wanted me to do. But I have never regretted asking for assignment to a combat group as an enlisted man, for I had no desire to be a "ninety day wonder". I was in good company as a "G.I." and I still take pride in that simple and earthy appellation.

I am especially proud to have served in the 451st Bombardment Group which was the only Heavy Bomb Group to have received three Presidential Unit Citations during all of World War II. And the 726th Squadron was the best of the Group. At the time most of us scarcely realized what an outstanding record our outfit was making but as the years fly past that achievement takes on an ever more satisfying glow.

AN APPRAISAL OF THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGH\
(WITH BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT)

The Allied military actions in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations during World War II have been a matter of interest and disagreement among participants and historians alike for many years. It is a matter of record that the senior American military planners strongly opposed the Operation Torch landings in North Africa and much preferred to husband men and resources for an invasion of Europe in 1943. Britain, by contrast, having very significant economic and political interests in the Mediterranean area, devised and promoted the plan. Ultimately Roosevelt, rejecting the advice of his senior advisors, acceded to Churchill's demands and agreed to the Torch proposal.

Whether or not an Allied invasion of the continent sometime in 1943 would have succeeded is still a matter of conjecture. It is certainly clear that the Normandy invasion beaches would have been far more vulnerable to attack in 1943 than they were in June of 1944. It was in December of 1943 that Rommel first took on his new assignment of planning and constructing fortifications on the most likely landing beaches. Prior to that time the vaunted "Atlantic Wall" was only a figment of Hitler's imagination.

I think it is equally clear that only very limited strategic objectives could reasonably have been expected from Operation Torch. Rommel's Afrika Korps was already in rapid retreat across Libya, a victim of "Ultra" intelligence as well as Montgomery's superior forces. With his supply lines from Italy under constant assault by the R.A.F. and the Royal Navy, it was only a matter of time before Rommel would be forced to concede the contest.

In view of the cost in men and materiel, the most that can be said of the North African campaign is that it was a useful, if costly, battlefield training experience for American infantry and its leaders. Perhaps the painful lessons learned at Kasserine Pass and other bloody fields in Tunisia were ultimately beneficial in preparing Eisenhower and his staff for the greater trials of Operation Overlord.

Once the North African campaign had been launched and the German forces had been defeated in Tunisia, it was virtually certain that the Allies, particularly Britain, would feel impelled to follow up with some further offensive action in the theater. Churchill was obsessed with thoughts of Europe's "soft under-belly", vulnerable to a thrust though Greece or Italy. Subsequent events were to prove beyond any doubt that this soft under-belly simply did not exist, except, perhaps, in southern France, which was the last beachhead of the war.

The choice of Italy, with its convenient Sicillian stepping stone, was as logical as any other point for the next Allied target, assuming another Mediterranean invasion was, in fact, necessary. It is obvious, however, that Italy itself was a bush league opponent. Her army had been chewed to small pieces in Libya and Mussolini had been reduced to a blustering German puppet - a paper tiger without fangs.

Thus, an invasion of Italy could really achieve only two major strategic objectives for the Allies: capture of the excellent airbases around Foggia for use by heavy bombers and the containment and reduction of a very skillful and experienced German army. The cost would be very high.

The invasion of Sicily and Italy was characterized by more command blunders than any other comparable Allied action during the war. The causes were poor planning, miscalculations and, sadly, incompetence at high levels. Compounding these problems were the most rugged terrain and the most severe weather conditions ever encountered by troops of the western Allies anywhere in the European Theater, including the Ardennes Forest. During the winter of 43/44, when the Allies were stalled at the Gustav Line, tanks, trucks and other vehicles were mired in deep mud and forward troops had to be supplied by pack mules. I think it doubtful that combat troops anywhere faced any more severe conditions, even those at Stalingrad. To add to these considerable woes the Allies in Italy faced a very skilled, determined, disciplined and professional German Army under a master defensive commander, Field Marshall Kesselring. The German troops who stood firm before Cassino, especially the First Parachute Division, were certainly some of the finest troops who fought during the war. Even the polyglot nature of the Allied forces in Italy contributed problems unique to that theater. More nationalities fought together in close cooperation in Italy than anywhere else in Europe and the resulting language and cultural differences created numerous and unusual supply and command problems.

Even considering all the above problems over which the Allies had no control, it is distressing to review the several serious blunders which were committed during the Italian campaign and to consider the thousands of lives lost and bodies maimed as the result of carelessness, poor planning and culpable incompetence.

The chain of tactical blunders began at Gela during the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. To bolster forces already ashore, a night drop of troopers from the 82nd Airborne Division was planned. Supposedly, every effort was made to assure success. A specific, narrow corridor was assigned for the transports to fly and each plane carried a special recognition light. But, as so often happens in wartime, someone didn't get the word. As the C-47's approached, American Navy gunners and anti-aircraft gunners ashore took them for Luftwaffe bombers and opened up on them with every available gun. G.I.'s who had already jumped were taken for some sort of diabolical German parachute bomb and dozens were machine-gunned by their buddies while dangling from their 'chutes. When it was all over some 23 C-47's had been shot down and well over 200 paratroopers had been killed. Incredibly, not one officer was cashiered for this debacle. It was the first of several to come.

After Sicily had been taken by the Allies and most of the German troops had escaped to Italy, the question arose as to where and how the invasion of Italy would take place. It is probably unfair to criticize the decisions which were made, with the benefit of four decades of hindsight, but it has always seemed to me that events in

Italy were controlled more by chance and circumstance, rather than by some master plan. By the latter half of 1943 the Mediterranean Theater had become a sort of backwater. Most of the high level planning and the lion's share of materiel and supplies were concentrated on the planned invasion of France. The Mediterranean and Pacific theaters had to make do with what was left over.

The Germans expected that the invasion of Italy would be aimed at a point well up the peninsula, probably north of Rome, in order to split the German forces in two. Rommel, who had command of Wehrmacht forces in the north, was quite certain Eisenhower would land his forces at La Spezia, where the Italian fleet was anchored, and drive across the narrow waist of Italy. Kesselring thought a landing further south was more likely and he was preparing to fight a determined delaying action. Accordingly, the Germans had already decided that they would make their strong stand in the north, along a line from Pisa to Rimini. Through their ability to decode German signals via Ultra, the Allies must have known of these plans. Thus it would seem logical that the landings would have been made at either Geata or Anzio and at Pescara (or even at some point above Rome) to cut off the German forces in the south, secure the needed ports at Naples, Bari and Taranto, and gain quick access to the airfields around Foggia. Rommel could not believe that the Allies would think of landing at the toe of the Italian boot and then crawl foot by foot up the peninsula, impeded by terrible roads and nearly impassable mountains and rivers.

And yet that is exactly what they did! On 3 September Montgomery landed his Eighth Army at Reggio di Calabra and six days later Mark Clark's combined American and British forces of the Fifth Army landed at Salerno. The two armies were too far apart to provide any sort of mutual assistance and Montgomery, confronted with bad roads, rugged country and thorough demolition of bridges and other facilities by the Germans, was slowed to a crawl. The Salerno landing was a near disaster. Though it was probably made with inadequate forces - four divisions landed with three held in reserve - the Allies there faced only one German division initially. The odds were thus reasonable but while Clark delayed to tidy things up and bring in his reserves, von Vietinghoff moved swiftly to bring in reinforcements from northern Italy, Albania and Yugoslavia. As a consequence, he very nearly pushed Clark back into the sea. It was a portent of how the bitter Italian campaign would be fought for the next year and a half.

I have always believed that Eisenhower made a very poor choice when he selected Mark Clark as Commander of the Fifth Army. Clark had been on Eisenhower's staff in Africa and apparently was a good staff officer, as Eisenhower noted in "Crusade in Europe". However, history has shown that good staff officers seldom make great field commanders and Clark was no exception to this rule. He was not brilliant or daring, or one to make rapid movements, like Patton. All too often he committed his troops to battle in inadequate strength, under impossible conditions or without proper planning. Like Montgomery, he was too concerned with his own press image. The Italian campaign witnessed numerous examples of Clark's poor leadership.

Near the end of September Eisenhower, bending to Churchill's pressure, decided to press on to Rome, even though Naples had not yet fallen. It is difficult to justify this decision. Rome had no real strategic importance - its capture would serve only political and psychological ends. This decision is even more inexplicable when we compare it with Eisenhower's decision to avoid taking Berlin in the spring of '45. At that time he said the German capital was not a military objective. Perhaps so, but the political consequences of an Allied, rather than Russian, capture of Berlin would have had a profound effect on post-war politics.

Looking back, it seems to me that the Allies' greatest mistake in Italy was the decision to break Kesselring's Gustav, or Winter, Line and press northward to take Rome and later all of northern Italy. By the time the Fifth and Eighth Armies had reached that line in late 1943 they had achieved both major strategic objectives that Italy had to offer. The airfields around Foggia were secure and a powerful, experienced German Army of some twenty divisions was tied down and confined to the mountains of Italy, and thus was not available to contest future Allied landings in France. The Allies had only to maintain pressure on this line to keep Kesselring fully occupied. Had he elected to withdraw up the peninsula the Allies could have advanced to keep him busy. The Luftwaffe was no longer a threat in Italy and with good port facilities at Naples and Bari Alexander was in a fine position to maintain a strong line of position as long as necessary. It should not have been necessary to fight the bitter, grinding and bloody battles at Cassino, the Rapido River, Anzio and hundreds of other locations from mountain to mountain and river to river, for another 800 kilometers. No one can know how many thousands of lives, Allied, German and Italian, might have been saved had we settled for only the southern half of Italy and allowed Kesselring's forces to wither on the vine, while the rest of the Wehrmacht was defeated in Germany.

At about the same time that Eisenhower decided to take Rome, Hitler made a decision to hold the Allies in southern Italy, rather than withdraw back to the Pisa-Rimini line, as previously planned. These decisions ensured that the bitter, no-holds-barred struggle in Italy would go on and on.

By January 1944 Kesselring's Winter Line had thwarted every attempt by Alexander to pierce it. An obvious and promising solution was an end run amphibious landing to out-flank the line to the north. Thus was devised the ill-fated landing at Anzio. The concept was quite sound as MacArthur was to prove brilliantly at Inchon in 1950, under far worse tactical conditions. However, Clark's planning for, and execution of the Anzio landing were fatally flawed. The overall plan called for separate Fifth and Eighth Army attacks against the Winter Line followed by the actual amphibious landing.

The task which Clark assigned to his forces in the west was a forced crossing of the Rapido River and the mission fell to the 36th Division. It was to be his greatest blunder in Italy. The river was incorporated as part of the Gustav line and was heavily defended with carefully emplaced artillery, mortars and machine-guns. The Germans had zeroed-in on every meter of the river. The Rapido was 50 feet wide

and ten feet deep in places and was flowing fast. The flood plain was a mile wide, with no cover. It was winter and bitterly cold, with deep mud everywhere. Since the 36th Division had no cover for the attack and no flank protection it was decided to attack this heavily defended river at night. Any experienced field commander could have predicted a disaster, as did General Walker, commander of the 36th Division. But General Clark ordered the attack to proceed on 20 January. Two days later the disaster was complete with over 1000 men lost and Kesselring still firmly in control of the Rapido River.

With this bloody demonstration that the Winter Line could not easily be breached and with a major element of the attack plan already a failure, one would have expected that Clark would either cancel the Anzio landing or strengthen it enough to be self-sufficient. Instead, he ordered it to proceed on 22 January with only two divisions and a scattering of attached units scheduled to make the landing. It was far too small a force to accomplish its objectives. The landing itself was accomplished without difficulty and the German forces were taken by complete surprise. By noon General Lucas' troops had advanced some three miles inland. But there they stopped and consolidated their position.

Because of Clark's fuzzy orders, Lucas thought his was only a diversionary action, rather than an aggressive attack to outflank the Winter Line. And so, with Clark's apparent concurrence, he spent several days tidying up the beachhead and waiting for more troops and supplies. It was not till the ninth day that he started his drive for the Alban Hills. By then it was too late. Kesselring had moved swiftly to bring up reinforcements from the Winter Line and from north Italy. By the fourth day after the landing he had forged a ring of steel around Lucas. Clark had failed to provide Lucas with adequate armor and when Kesselring was in position to counter-attack he nearly pushed the American forces off the beachhead, into the sea. Only the raw courage of the 45th Division G.I.'s prevented a total disaster. Finally, at Alexander's insistence, Clark relieved Lucas and placed General Truscott in command at Anzio.

It was not enough. The Anzio beachhead was totally surrounded and contained. It ceased to be a real problem for Kesselring. Axis Sally aptly described Anzio as "The largest self-supporting P.O.W. camp in the world." Ultimately, the blame for this fiasco must rest with Clark, who was guilty of poor planning, and who failed to provide adequate troops and armor for the objectives of the landing. Lucas was clearly not the man for the job but even Patton could not have made a silk purse from the sow's ear provided by Clark.

After the Rapido River and Anzio fiascos one would have thought that Field Marshall Alexander would have become sufficiently exasperated with Clark to have relieved him, but he did not. Perhaps it would be expecting too much for a British commander to relieve an American Army commander under the sensitive conditions which then existed. Instead, Clark was promoted to four-star General during his tour in Italy. One cannot but compare this situation with that of General Patton who was almost cashiered for merely slapping a soldier who may well have deserved it. (Even if he did not, the slapping incident was blown up

out of all proportion to its true importance by the press and by Eisenhower himself. Patton slapped one man but Clark, through his blunders, brought about death and injury to thousands of men.)

Without question the most inexcusable tragedy which occurred during the Italian campaign was the bombing of Monte Cassino. I have always been thankful that the 451st Bomb Group did not participate in that ill-advised action on 15 February 1944. We had been assigned another target in Italy that day. To be sure, had we been ordered to bomb the monastery we would have done so - military orders are never optional.

It was the New Zealand commander, General Freyberg, who insisted that Monte Cassino be bombed, for he and his troops were convinced that the Germans were using it as an observation post. There was never a shred of evidence to support that belief. On the contrary, the German officer commanding at Cassino, General von Senger, who was Catholic and a lay brother of the Benedictine Order, was scrupulously correct in his treatment of the monastery. He had assisted the monks in removing most of the ancient treasures from the building and transporting them to Rome for safe keeping and had posted guards at the only entrance to the monastery to prevent any of his troops from entering for any reason. General Clark, to his credit, opposed the bombing but the American commanders of the 12th and 15th Air Forces were enthusiastic - always eager to demonstrate their air power. Finally Field Marshall Alexander approved and the deed was done on 15 February. Some 300 monks and civilian refugees in the building were killed, but not a single German. Even more ironically, once the monastery had been bombed the Germans understandably then felt justified in entering the rubble and using it as a fortress. The follow-up Allied ground attack failed to break the Winter Line and the new German fortress on Monastery Hill resisted every effort to take it for another three months.

A month later, on 15 March, Alexander made another effort to break the Winter Line. In preparation for this new attack bombers of the 12th and 15th Air Forces were ordered to smash the town of Cassino. My Bomb Group, the 451st, participated in this idiotic and fruitless attack. The all-day bombing of Cassino only exacerbated combat conditions for the ground troops. The stone buildings of the town were reduced to rubble which Allied tanks and other vehicles could not penetrate. The German First Parachute Division crawled out of the cellars and held their positions tenaciously and another Allied drive failed miserably. The bombing of Cassino must go down in history along with the bombing of Dresden, Coventry and Caen as among the worst acts of military vandalism perpetrated during World War II. Sadly, Allied commanders didn't even seem to learn from past mistakes. Montgomery's decision to have the R.A.F. unleash its Lancasters against the ancient city of Caen produced exactly the same results as Cassino - an instant fortress of rubble for the German defenders and an impenetrable barrier for Allied tanks.

The Winter Line was finally broken in May when Alexander did what he should have done much sooner. He pulled the Eighth Army in from the stalled Adriatic front, massed it with the Fifth Army and executed a surprise flanking movement around Cassino. Once Kesselring had been

flanked he had no choice but to withdraw from Cassino and its ruined monastery. Initially, the First Parachute Division refused to budge and finally had to be ordered to withdraw by Hitler. Only then did General Anders' Polish troops finally occupy Monte Cassino.

After the Winter Line was breached on 17 May Alexander ordered Clark to break out of Anzio and cut Highway 6 in order to bottle up and capture the retreating German forces. It was a rare opportunity to gain a substantial victory but Clark had at least one more blunder to commit. This time it wasn't a case of incompetence, but one of ambition. He had visions of fame and grandeur. Rome was an ancient capital which had been the prize of many conquerors and Clark wanted to gain that prize first for himself and secondly for the American Fifth Army. He apparently could not abide the thought of allowing the British Eighth Army to reach the Eternal City first. And so, he simply ignored Alexander's orders and drove north to have his picture taken entering Rome. Thus von Vietinghoff's forces escaped and would continue to fight in northern Italy for another year. Clark had clearly been insubordinate in failing to obey Alexander's orders but, unbelievably, he retained his command. I think it one of the great mysteries of World War II. The relatively pointless drive for Rome had cost overall nearly 80,000 Allied and German casualties.

CONCLUSION

Wars are the bitter fruits of political failures. World War II, like all other wars, could have been prevented at the right time and place. The political considerations incorporated in the Treaty of Versailles almost assured that another world conflict would ensue. Yet, in spite of the political failures, the war might have been prevented. While one can never second-guess history it seems at least possible that the western democracies could have clipped the wings of the Japanese militarists in 1931 when they first entered Manchuria. And France, which had the strongest army in the world at the time, could have stopped Hitler in his tracks when he occupied the Reinland in the spring of 1936. By 1938 it was much too late. Hitler had bluffed and won.

War, of course, is often welcome to professional soldiers. For high ranking officers it represents the one opportunity to utilize the training and skills they have spent a lifetime acquiring. It is their one chance for fame, decorations and rapid promotion. Unfortunately, it falls to the citizen-soldier, the volunteer and the conscript, to fight the battles, to bleed and to die. General Heinz Guderian said it well in his book, PANZER LEADER, "Unfortunately, it is not the habit of politicians to appear in conspicuous places when the bullets begin to fly. They prefer to remain in some safe retreat and to let the soldiers carry out 'the continuation of policy by other means'."

Cocoa Beach, Florida - November 1983

ERRATA

Since I first printed this history I have found a few errors which should be corrected. They are listed below by page and paragraph number.

- Page 34, ¶ 2 : The expression, "Ford River Rouge Plant" should be corrected to read: Ford Willow Run Plant .

- Page 48, ¶ 2 : The exploit of A/C 636 - "Three Feathers" - as I related it in this paragraph, was as I remembered it , told to me verbally (probably third hand!) in early 1944. In 1988 I received a copy of a letter from Lt. Col. Charles Morfit (USAF retired), who was Co-pilot on that flight. The following corrections should be made, based on his first hand experience:

  The loss of three engines occurred on the first leg of the flight from West Palm Beach over the Caribbean Sea near the Windward Islands, **NOT** over the Atlantic between South America and Africa, as stated. The only engine which was functioning normally was the number one engine. Finally, the emergency landing was made, NOT at Ascension Island . but at St. Lucia Island. The other details are correct as stated.

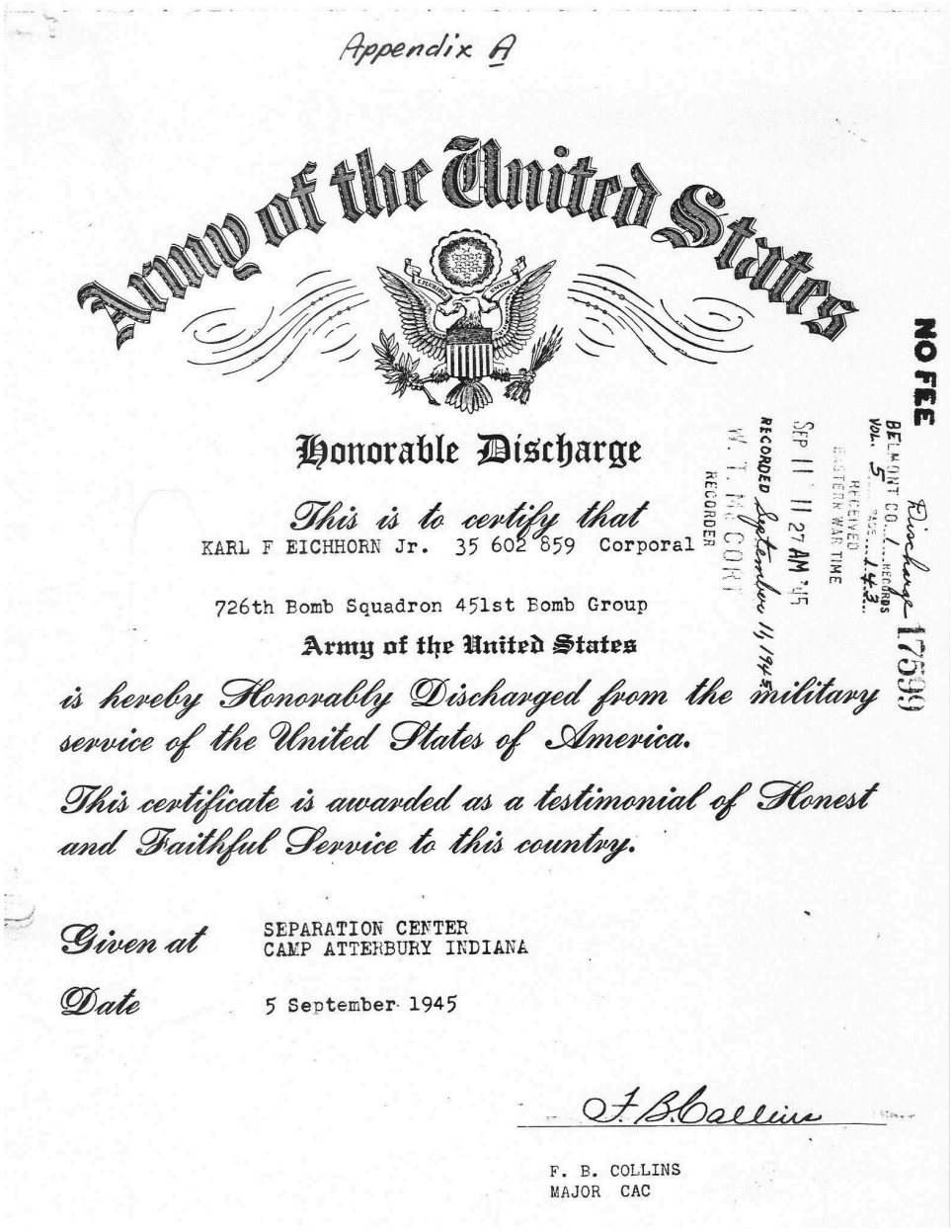
- Page 49, ¶ 3 : The reference to the 49 th Bomb Wing here is incorrect. When the 451 st Bomb Group first went into combat in January 1944 it was assigned to an existing Heavy Bombardment Wing, the 47 th. The other Groups in this Wing at the time were the 98 th, the 376 th, the 449 th and the 450 th. In April 1944, when the 451 st Bomb Group was moved to its new and permanent base at Castellucio, it was transferred to the newly created 49 th Wing, which also included the 461 st and 484 th Bomb Groups.

- Page 59, ¶ 7 : The name of the Italian village referred to is correctly spelled with one "c", i.e. Castellucio.

- Page 68, ¶ 2 : Since writing about this incident, I have been advised by our former ordnance sergeant, Art Gallagher, that the men killed in this explosion were not G.I.'s, but Italian civilians who had been hired by the Air Force to offload and transfer the bombs to trailers for movement to our airfield.

KFE – July 1989

Appendix



Appendix A

Army of the United States

NO FEE

Discharge 17589

BELMONT CO. RECORDS
VOL. 5 PAGE 142

RECEIVED
EASTERN WAR TIME

SEP 11 11 27 AM '45

RECORDED September 11, 1945
W. T. McCORT
RECORDER

Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

KARL F EICHHORN Jr. 35 602 859 Corporal

726th Bomb Squadron 451st Bomb Group

Army of the United States

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at SEPARATION CENTER
CAMP ATTERBURY INDIANA

Date 5 September 1945

F. B. Collins

F. B. COLLINS
MAJOR CAC

Appendix A
(Reverse Side)

ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION

HONORABLE DISCHARGE

5-12-33 Kcc/21

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL	2. ARMY SERIAL NO.	3. GRADE	4. ARM OR SERVICE	5. COMPONENT
EICHHORN KARL F Jr	35 602 859	Cpl	AC	AUS

6. ORGANIZATION	7. DATE OF SEPARATION	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION
726 Bomb Sq 451st Bomb Gp	5 Sep 45	Sep Cen Camp Atterbury Ind

9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES	10. DATE OF BIRTH	11. PLACE OF BIRTH
732 Wiley Ave Barnesville Ohio	4 Jun 24	Cleveland Ohio

12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT	13. COLOR EYES	14. COLOR HAIR	15. HEIGHT	16. WEIGHT	17. NO. DEPEND.
See # 9	blue	brown	5'9"	150 LBS.	0

18. RACE			19. MARITAL STATUS			20. U.S. CITIZEN		21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO.
WHITE	NEGRO	OTHER (specify)	SINGLE	MARRIED	OTHER (specify)	YES	NO	Student High School 0-4
X			X			X		

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION	23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT	24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE	25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE
13 Feb 43		20 Feb 43	Akron Ohio

SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA	26. REGISTERED YES	26. REGISTERED NO	27. LOCAL S.S. BOARD NO.	28. COUNTY AND STATE	29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE
	X		# 4	Belmont Ohio	See # 9

30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO.	31. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND DATE (i.e., infantry, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.)
Airplane Armorer 911	Rifle Marksman;

32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS

Po Valley; Naples-Foggia; North Appenines; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Southern France; Air Offensive Europe; Rome Arno; *

33. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS EAME Theater Ribbon w/ 10 Bronze Stars per WD GO #33/45; Good Conduct Ribbon per GO # 3/44 Hq 451st Bomb Gp; Distinguished Unit Citation w/2 Oak leaf Clusters per WDGO#67/44;GO#3757/44Hq 15AF;WDGO#77/44

34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION

None

35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES				36. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN		
SMALLPOX	TYPHOID	TETANUS	OTHER (specify)	DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION	DATE OF ARRIVAL
1 Feb 45	28 Aug 44	10 Jun 44	Ty 1 Apr 45	3 Dec 43	NATO	23 Dec43
				4 Jun 45	USA	14 Jun 45

37. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE						38. HIGHEST GRADE HELD
CONTINENTAL SERVICE			FOREIGN SERVICE			
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	
1	0	4	1	6	12	Cpl

39. PRIOR SERVICE

None

40. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION

Conv of Govt RR1-1 (DEMOBILIZATION) AR 615-365 15 Dec 44

41. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED	42. EDUCATION (Years)		
	Grammar	High School	College
ACFT Arm SO 184 P 7, HQ L F Col	8	4	0

PAY DATA Vou 390

43. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURPOSES			44. MUSTERING OUT PAY		45. SOLDIER DEPOSITS	46. TRAVEL PAY	47. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	TOTAL	THIS PAYMENT			
2	6	23	$ 300	$ 100	None	$ 16.20	126.20 H F GILLIE Capt FD

INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN THIRTY-ONE DAYS THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

48. KIND OF INSURANCE			49. HOW PAID		50. Effective Date of Allotment Discontinuance	51. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50)	52. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	53. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO		
Nat. Serv.	U.S. Govt.	None	Allotment	Direct to V. A.				Continue	Continue Only	Discontinue
X			X		31 Aug 45	30 Sept 45	$ 6.50	X	$	

54. RIGHT THUMB PRINT

55. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)

Inactive Service in ERC from 13 Feb 43 thru 19 Feb 43
No days lost under AW 107; Lapel button issued
ASR(12 May 45) 94
* Air Combat Balkins:

56. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED

Karl F. Eichhorn Jr.

57. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature)

P D KISTER 2nd Lt MAC

P D Kister

WD AGO FORM 53-55
1 November 1944

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Forms 53 and 55 for enlisted persons entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which will not be used after receipt of this revision.

OHIO WORLD WAR II COMPENSATION APPLIED FOR | CLAIM No. 292595

Appendix B

HEADQUARTERS
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
DOW FIELD, BANGOR, MAINE

5 August 1945
(Date)

SUBJECT: Authorization for Awards.

TO : Whom It May Concern.

1. KARL F. EICHHORN (Name), Corporal (Rank), 35602859 (ASN), is authorized to wear the following listed decorations earned while a member of the 726th Bombardment Squadron (Squadron), 451st Bombardment Group from August 1943 to August 1945:

a. Battle Participation Awards:

1. Naples-Foggia Campaign-----Ltr MTOUSA 10 Nov 44
   Inclusive dates--9 Sept 43 to 21 Jan 44
2. Southern France Campaign---Ltr NATOUSA 18 Oct 44
   Inclusive dates--15 Aug 44 to 14 Sept 44
3. Rome-Arno Campaign--------Ltr MTOUSA 10 Nov 44
   Inclusive dates--22 Jan 44 to 9 Sept 44
4. Normandy Campaign---------Ltr ETOUSA 8 Dec 44
   Inclusive dates--6 Jun 44 to 24 Jul 44
5. Air Offensive Europe-------Ltr ETOUSA 6 Jan 45
   Inclusive dates--26 Dec 43 to 5 Jun 44
6. Air Combat Balkans---------Ltr MTOUSA 19 Apr 45
   Inclusive dates--1 Nov 43 to 31 Dec 44
7. Germany Campaign----------Ltr ETOUSA 14 Apr 45
   Inclusive dates--15 Sept 44 to 7 May 45
8. Northern France Campaign---Ltr ETOUSA 21 Apr 45
   Inclusive dates--25 Jul 44 to 15 Sept 44
9. North Appennines Campaign--Ltr MTOUSA 9 May 45
   Inclusive dates--10 Sept 44 to 4 Apr 45
10. Po Valley Campaign--------Ltr MTOUSA 9 May 45
    Inclusive dates--5 Apr 45 to (announced later)

b. Distinguished Unit Citations:

1. Distinguished Unit Badge--WD, GO #67, 16 Aug 44
2. Oak Leaf Cluster to Distinguished Unit Badge
   WD, GO #77, 28 Sept 44
3. Oak Leaf Cluster to Distinguished Unit Badge
   GO #3757, Fifteenth Air Force, 2 Oct 44

c. Other Awards:

1. Good Conduct Medal--GO #3, Hq 451st Bombardment Group (H), dtd 20 February 1944.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

Albert F Ogg

ALBERT F. OGG, CAPT AC
Adjutant.

Appendix C-1

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-bmr

1 July 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 1481)

Citation of Unit I

SECTION I -- CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

451st BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. Notified to prepare maximum aircraft in the Group for a bombing mission to Regensburg, Germany, ground personnel worked feverishly, enthusiastically, and with untiring intensity to get all B-24 type aircraft in the best possible mechanical condition to insure the success of the operation. On 25 February 1944, despite the highly unsatisfactory conditions of the airdrome, forty (40) B-24's of the 451st Bombardment Group took off to bomb the Regensburg Prufening Aircraft Factory. Commanders and all personnel participating in the mission had bee briefed that the enemy was capable of intercepting the formation with approximately two-hundred (200) fighters and that the route to the target would be without fighter escort. As the Group penetrated enemy territory, a running battle continuing to the target, ensued, during which time approximately two-hundred (200) enemy fighters intercepted the formation with well coordinated and vicious attacks. In the violent and bitter aerial battle, enemy aircraft used rocket guns, aerial flak, cannon and machine guns in an effort to disrupt the operation. Despite the intense, accurate, and heavy anti-aircraft fire, and enemy fighters over the target, the Group maintained a close formation, and scored many direct hits on the assigned target. The formation flown and the coordination between the attack units resulted in sixteen (16) enemy fighters destroyed, three (3) probably destroyed, and six (6) damaged, to the loss of six (6) aircraft of the 451st Bombardment Group. The tremendous material damage inflicted by the 451st Bombardment Group contributed greatly to the curtailment of aircraft production by the enemy at a time of great importance. The grim determination, outstanding skill and unhesitating courage of the officers and men of the 451st Bombardment Group in accomplishing the objectives of this mission through the heaviest of enemy opposition, reflects great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
J. M. IVINS,
Lieutenant Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

A TRUE COPY:

C. E. CAMPBELL, JR.
WOJG, USA.

Appendix C-2

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-rmb

5 August 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 2332)

Section Citation of Unit I

SECTION I - CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular 26, North African Theater of Operations, 6 March 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 5 April 1944, under the most difficult and trying conditions on the ground and despite extremely adverse weather conditions in the air, the Group successfully assembled thirty-four (34) B-24 type aircraft heavily loaded with maximum tonnage of high explosive bombs and set course for the vital enemy oil installations and marshalling yards at Ploesti, Rumania. Having been briefed to anticipate heavy interception from approximately two hundred (200) enemy aircraft and knowing that they would be without fighter escort in the vicinity of the target, the Group penetrated enemy territory determined to carry on the offensive. Well before arrival at the target area, they were intercepted by enemy, which in waves of approximately eighty-five (85) at a time opened the attack with rocket fire and closed in to within one hundred (100) yards with their automatic weapons. The savage running air-battle continued over the target through a maelstrom of intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire and lasted without interruption for forty-five (45) minutes on the return trip. In the ensuing violent and bitter aerial battle, during which five (5) of our bombers were shot down, thirty-five (35) enemy aircraft were destroyed or damaged (20) known destroyed, twelve (12) probably destroyed and three (3) known to be damaged. Despite the intense opposition of the enemy, the 451st Bombardment Group (H) successfully delivered a devastating blow to the important enemy oil installations and communications facilities. The tremendous material damage contributed greatly to the curtailment of oil production and shipment by the enemy. The grim determination, outstanding skill and heroic courage of the combat crews, together with the professional skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) in accomplishing this mission through the heaviest enemy opposition in outstanding in the history of aerial warfare and is deserving of emulation. By their gallant and outstanding performance of duty those men have reflected great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
/t/ J. M. IVINS,
Lieutenant Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

C. E. CAMPBELL JR.
WOJG, USA

DISTRIBUTION: "D"
plus: 1 - Stars and Stripes, Naples.
1 - Stars and Stripes, Algiers

Appendix C-3

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-bmr

2 October 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 3757)

Citation of Unit I

SECTION I -- CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP. For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. Notified to prepare their aircraft for a vital mission against the Markersdorf Airdrome, Vienna, Austria, in a counter air operation, the ground crews worked with enthusiasm to insure the mechanical perfection of their planes for the forthcoming mission. On 23 August 1944, twenty-four (24) B-24 type aircraft, heavily loaded with maximum tonnage, took off and set course for their destination. Enroute the formation was intercepted by numerous enemy fighters in a well coordinated attack, emerging from protective cloud covering six (6) to ten (10) abreast and employing twenty-millimeter cannon in their violent assaults. The highly aggressive enemy fighters made suicidal attempts against the bombers, in a desperate attempt to break up and destroy the formation, to prevent the successful completion of their vital mission. Displaying outstanding courage, professional skill and fortitude, the gallant crews battled their way through the overwhelming enemy opposition to the target, where, under continued heavy opposition, they completed a highly successful bombing run. Through their superior ability to maintain a tight protective formation and to direct heavy defensive fire against the fierce attacks of enemy, the Group accounted for twenty-nine (29) enemy aircraft destroyed or damaged in the air. The excellent bombing pattern on the ground installations inflicted grave damage to important buildings and supplies, and twelve (12) enemy planes were destroyed on the ground. Throughout the aerial battle, the 451st Bombardment Group lost nine (9) heavy bombers, with others severely damaged by heavy enemy fire. Through this outstanding achievement a telling blow was struck at the fighter aircraft concentrations in the Vienna area, thus effectively and seriously crippling enemy operational efficiency at a time of great importance. By the outstanding courage, professional skill and unwavering determination of the combat crews. together with the superior technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 451st Bombardment Group has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
J. M. IVINS
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

A TRUE COPY

DISTRIBUTION: "D"

LYNN J. BARTLETT, JR.
Captain, Air Corps.

Appendix D

ORIENTATION

Restriction

Probably all of you will be out of the Army within 48 hours unless your records are not in good order or you are held up by your physical examination. In order to process you that quickly you will have to be available at all times. You will be restricted to the Post. A lot of this Post is off limits. You will find a map in your barracks showing you the areas that are off limits. In general you may go to the PX and movies, for anything else check the map.

Military Regulations

Until your final release you are subject to all military regulations. Keep yourself neat and presentable. Whenever you leave a building or you are not in the area, be sure that your cap is worn properly and your sleeves are rolled down and buttoned. Trouser legs are not to be turned up at the bottom. You do not have to wear a tie. Salute all officers courteously. Walk on the sidewalks. Do not walk in the streets or on the grass. Any of you who do not follow these rules are subject to removal from the processing roster and your name will be reported to the Adjutant. You, therefore, delay your departure.

Signing out with Barracks CQ

Before leaving your barracks get permission from your barracks CQ or leader and tell him where you are going. The reason you men must keep your barracks leader informed as to your whereabouts is because in many cases it is necessary for the people who are working on your records to obtain information from you to complete them, and there is not sufficient time to permit us to search or wait for you. You may be wanted at anytime concerning your processing. If we cannot find you when we want you, we may have to delay your discharge. Once your name is on a roster be sure to keep all appointments. If you miss an appointment you might be dropped from the roster and it may delay your discharge for a week.

Housing

Do not bring friends, relatives or dependents on the Post, housing facilities are not available and they are not available in the surrounding towns.

Memorandum

As a result of the expansion of the Separation Center, we are presently employing a large number of WACs and young girls from communities adjacent to Camp Atterbury. In addition to this, many mothers, sisters, wives, and friends of officers and enlisted men visit the Center daily. In general the female population of the Center is increasing and it is the responsibility of the Army to care for and protect them while here. Some men seem to be under the erroneous impression that our women visitors and employees are in the area for the sole purpose of being subjected to cheap remarks, ungentlemanly advances, whistling, and the like. The exact opposite is true and will be the case in this Separation Center as it has been in the service for years past.

PWs

If any of you men were PWs overseas and have claims for property lost, damaged or stolen while a prisoner see your company commander at the company to which you are assigned.

We have a large number of PWs here on the Post. Do not fraternize with them or molest them. Just leave them alone.

Awards

If there are any medals that you have been authorized, but have not received or which you may have lost, get your records when your name is called and take them to the awards desk where they will be requisitioned. You will receive them before you leave the post. (Any medal such as the Air Medal, DFC, Silver or Bronze star medal, Purple Heart, Soldier's Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Infantry Combat Badge or Medical Combat Badge are obtainable without delay). Overseas ribbons and small bronze battle stars may be purchased at the PX.

This is your last opportunity to obtain these medals; once you leave this room you cannot come back and claim them for your records are then in process and we cannot locate them, so be sure you take care of any claims for medals before you leave this room.

Claims

If there are any first three graders making claim for moving their dependents or anyone making claim for per-diem or travel pay, get your records when your name is called and see payroll man.

Turn In

The following should be turned in to the man who has your records:

Paybooks.
Soldier's Deposit books.
Unused meal tickets.
Flight certificate or Form #5 which entitles Air Corps men to flying pay.
Questionnaire.

Transportation Requests

If any man has unused Transportation Requests, take them to the Post Transportation Office where you will be given a receipt for them. Bring that receipt with a copy of your orders back to this room and turn them in to the Finance desk where a voucher will be made up that will reimburse you for that unused T/R.

Weapons

If you have any ammunition it must be turned in at shakedown. No one will be permitted to have any ammunition in his possession. Any weapons brought back from overseas must be left in the bottom of your barracks bag and under no circumstances will you remove them while on the Post for any reason. That means that you cannot remove it even for cleaning purposes. If any man disobeys this order the weapon will be confiscated and disciplinary action taken. We had one near accident and don't intend to have another.

Shakedown

You will be given a barracks card when your name is called, take that card, pick up your baggage and go to clothing shakedown. If you have no baggage turn baggage checks to shakedown. Everything that is GI will be taken from you including clothing purchased at stores unless you can identify it as belonging to you by a receipt, bill or label in the garment.

You are authorized to leave this Post with the following:

One complete OD uniform with blouse
One complete suntan uniform (Not 2 suntans in place of CDs)
All underclothing and socks
1 Pair shoes
(Eisenhower jacket may be retained in place of a blouse)

If any of this clothing that you are authorized to take with you is worn, torn or does not fit, turn it in. A clothing slip will be issued indicating the garments you are short and the sizes. Do not lose that slip. About 2 or 3 hours before you actually leave the Post, clean, serviceable uniforms will be issued based on that clothing slip. The Army will see to it that you leave here looking presentable.

Glasses

Any man that wears glasses will wear them at his physical examination. As soon as your name is placed on a roster make sure that you have them with you.

Meal Hours

Breakfast 0630 to 0715, no formation, Dinner 1120, formation in barracks, Supper 1650, formation in barracks.

Sick-Call

0800 and 1300. Do not report to the dispensary unless you have your name entered on the sick book.

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

April, 1945

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean Theatre

Final victory is near. The German Forces are now very groggy and only need one mighty punch to knock them out for good. The moment has now come for us to take the field for the last battle which will end the war in Europe. You know what our comrades in the West and in the East are doing on the battlefields. It is now our turn to play our decisive part. It will not be a walk-over; a mortally wounded beast can still be very dangerous. You must be prepared for a hard and bitter fight; but the end is quite certain — there is not the slightest shadow of doubt about that. You, who have won every battle you have fought, are going to win this last one.

Forward then into battle with confidence, faith and determination to see it through to the end. Godspeed and good luck to you all.

H.R. Alexander

Field-Marshal,
Supreme Allied Commander,
Mediterranean Theatre.

Appendix E

Appendix F

Cpl. Karl F. Eichhorn, jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. K. F. Eichhorn, 732 Wiley av., Barnesville, armament man, has been authorized to wear a second cluster to his Distinguished Unit Badge as a ground member of the veteran 451st bombardment group.

The 451st received its latest battle decoration for an August 23 attack on the Markersdorf Airdrome, Vienna, Austria. Its previous two battle streamers were for 15th Air Force missions over Regonsburg, Germany, and Ploesti, Rumania.

A graduate of Barnesville high school, Corporal Eichhorn entered the army on Feb. 13, 1943, and came overseas with the group in December of 1943.

Welcome HOME!

Discharge papers of 13 more soldiers who went into service through the Barnesville Selective Service Board have been received during the past week. The list follows:

From Camp Atterbury, Ind.

Mansel A. McCormick, Bethesda, Aug. 31.

Louis Long, 320 N. Lincoln Ave., Barnesville, Sept. 1.

Paul V. Gray, 347 S. Gardner St., Barnesville, Sept. 1.

Frederic A. Taylor, W. Main St., Barnesville, Sept. 7.

Karl F. Eichhorn, 732 Wiley Ave., Barnesville, Sept. 5.

Frederick F. Pierce, RFD 3, Barnesville, Aug. 26.

Robert E. Pittman, Bethesda, Sept. 9.

From Indiantown Gap, Pa.

Elmer W. Peterson, RFD 1, Piedmont, Aug. 30.

Charles D. DeBertrand, RFD 2, Belmont, Aug. 30.

Glendon G. Simeral, RFD 1, Bethesda, Sept. 5.

Roger C. Keadle, 407 Leggets Addition, Barnesville, at Danville, Ky. on Aug. 27, 1945.

Lowell F. McKelvey, Box 178, Bethesda, at Crile General Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio on Sept. 4, 1945.

Vernon Hyde, Barnesville, at Billings General Hospital, Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, on Sept. 7, 1945.

AWARDED SECOND CLUSTER

15TH AAF IN ITALY—Cpl. Karl F. Eichhorn, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. K. F. Eichhorn, 732 Wiley Ave., Barnesville, armament man, has been authorized to wear a second cluster to his Distinguished Unit Badge as a ground member of the veteran 451st Bombardment Group.

The 451st received its latest battle decoration for an August 23rd attack on the Markersdorf Airdrome, Vienna, Austria. Its previous two battle streamers were for 15th Air Force missions over Regonsburg, Germany, and Ploesti, Rumania.

The Vienna citation describes German fighters "in a well coordinated attack" breaking six to ten abreast from clouds below the Liberators.

"The highly aggressive enemy fighters made suicidal attempts against the bombers", the citation continues, "in a desperate attempt to break up and destroy the formation."

Formations unbroken, the planes made a "highly successful bombing run", despite heavy flak fire which followed the fighter attacks.

The ground crews were mentioned in the citation for their "superior technical skill and devotion to duty" in readying planes for the mission.

A graduate of Barnesville high school, Corporal Eichhorn entered the army on Feb. 13, 1943, and came overseas with the group in December of 1943.

GETS DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE, CLUSTER

15TH AAF IN ITALY—Cpl. Karl F. Eichhorn, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. K. F. Eichhorn, Barnesville, armament man in a B-24 Liberator bomber squadron, has been auhtorized to wear the Distinguished Unit Badge with one bronze cluster as a member of a group which twice has been cited "for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy."

The group received its original gold-rimmed blue ribbon for an attack on the Prufening aircraft factory at Regensburg, Germany, on February 25th. The cluster was added for a mission over the Ploesti, Rumania, oil refineries on April 5th.

The citations read, in part:
(For Regensburg)

"Notified to prepare maximum aircraft...personnel worked feverishly, enthusiastically, and with untiring intensity...The tremendous material damage inflicted ...contributed greatly to the curtailment of aircraft production by the enemy at a time of great importance."

For Ploesti:

"Under the most difficult and trying conditions on the group and despite extremely adverse weather conditions in the air, the group...successfully delivered a devastating blow to the important enemy oil installations.

"The grim determination...and heroic courage of the combat crews, together with the professional skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel...are outstanding in the history of aerial warfare."

A graduate of Barnesville high school, Corporal Eichhorn entered the army on Feb. 13, 1943. He joined his present group more than 18 months ago.

Appendix C-1

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-bmr

1 July 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 1481)

Citation of Unit I

SECTION I -- CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

451st BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. Notified to prepare maximum aircraft in the Group for a bombing mission to Regensburg, Germany, ground personnel worked feverishly, enthusiastically, and with untiring intensity to get all B-24 type aircraft in the best possible mechanical condition to insure the success of the operation. On 25 February 1944, despite the highly unsatisfactory conditions of the airdrome, forty (40) B-24's of the 451st Bombardment Group took off to bomb the Regensburg Prufening Aircraft Factory. Commanders and all personnel participating in the mission had bee briefed that the enemy was capable of intercepting the formation with approximately two-hundred (200) fighters and that the route to the target would be without fighter escort. As the Group penetrated enemy territory, a running battle continuing to the target, ensued, during which time approximately two-hundred (200) enemy fighters intercepted the formation with well coordinated and vicious attacks. In the violent and bitter aerial battle, enemy aircraft used rocket guns, aerial flak, cannon and machine guns in an effort to disrupt the operation. Despite the intense, accurate, and heavy anti-aircraft fire, and enemy fighters over the target, the Group maintained a close formation, and scored many direct hits on the assigned target. The formation flown and the coordination between the attack units resulted in sixteen (16) enemy fighters destroyed, three (3) probably destroyed, and six (6) damaged, to the loss of six (6) aircraft of the 451st Bombardment Group. The tremendous material damage inflicted by the 451st Bombardment Group contributed greatly to the curtailment of aircraft production by the enemy at a time of great importance. The grim determination, outstanding skill and unhesitating courage of the officers and men of the 451st Bombardment Group in accomplishing the objectives of this mission through the heaviest of enemy opposition, reflects great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
J. M. IVINS,
Lieutenant Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

A TRUE COPY:

C. E. CAMPBELL, JR.
WOJG, USA.

Appendix G

DOW FIELD
Observer

THE DOW FIELD OBSERVER—BANGOR, ME.—WEDNESDAY, 25 JULY, 1945 Vol. III. No. 38

nd Youngsters Sworm Over Base

15th Air Force Veterans Here for Reassignment

Fifteenth Air Force veterans of campaigns in Africa and Italy are being processed at Dow Field this week for transfer to U. S. bases of the North Atlantic Division. A majority of these members of the 451st Bomb Group and 525th Air Service Group wear ten battle stars on their ETO ribbons, and have been awarded three Distinguished Unit Badges for their part in flattening Ploesti, in Roumania; Markersdorf, in Austria, and Regensburg, in Germany, and posses numerous other decorations.

2,000 to Be Processed

About 2,000 officers and men of the Groups will be processed here for assignment to Dow, Presque Isle, Grenier, LaGuardia, and Washington National Airport—all NAD bases. None will be reassigned to overseas duty.

The first shipments of men arrived here in two troop trains Saturday, boarded at Ft. Dix, N. J., following their rotation leaves.

Elaborate preparations have been made on the main base and in the Union Street area, so that an individual can be processed in a week. Classification is being handled by an NAD Headquarters team, here from Manchester. The Personal Affairs office and Information and Education office of Dow are handling details coming under their functions.

While here, the Groups will operate as units, handling their own administration. Facilities on the main base are open to them, with shuttle buses connecting the two locations. The men receive passes, and buses to town run directly to their area.

Commanding Officer

Acting in command of the Staging Area is Pacific-ETO veteran Col. LeRoy Stefonowicz, CO of the 451st Bomb Group.

Col. Stefanowicz is an old-timer at combat flying, with 15 months in the Pacific, including Fiji and Guadalcanal, and 16½ months in the European Theater of Operations. He wears the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross and one Cluster, the Bronze Star and one Cluster, the Air Medal with six Clusters, the Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon with three battle stars, and the European Theater Ribbon with six battle stars.

Following reassignment to the five ATC bases, 15th Air Force veterans eligible for discharge will be released under quotas allowed the North Atlantic Division.

Appendix H

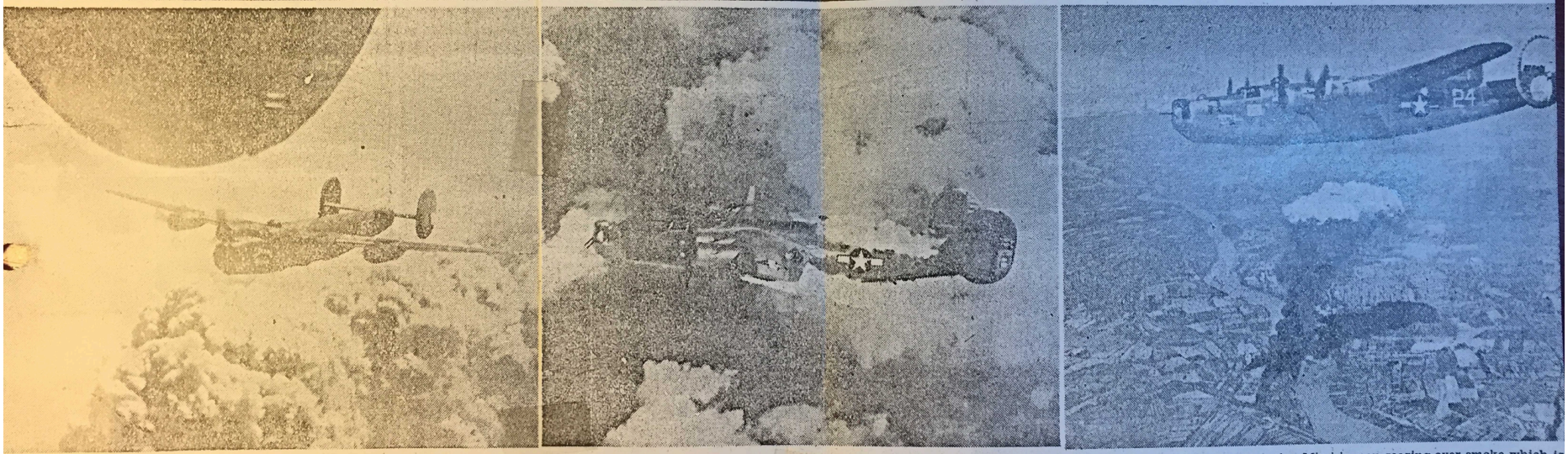
Maine's LARGEST Daily Circulation Yesterday's Sale 52,782

Bangor Daily News

VOL. 55 BANGOR, ME., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1945 FIVE CENTS

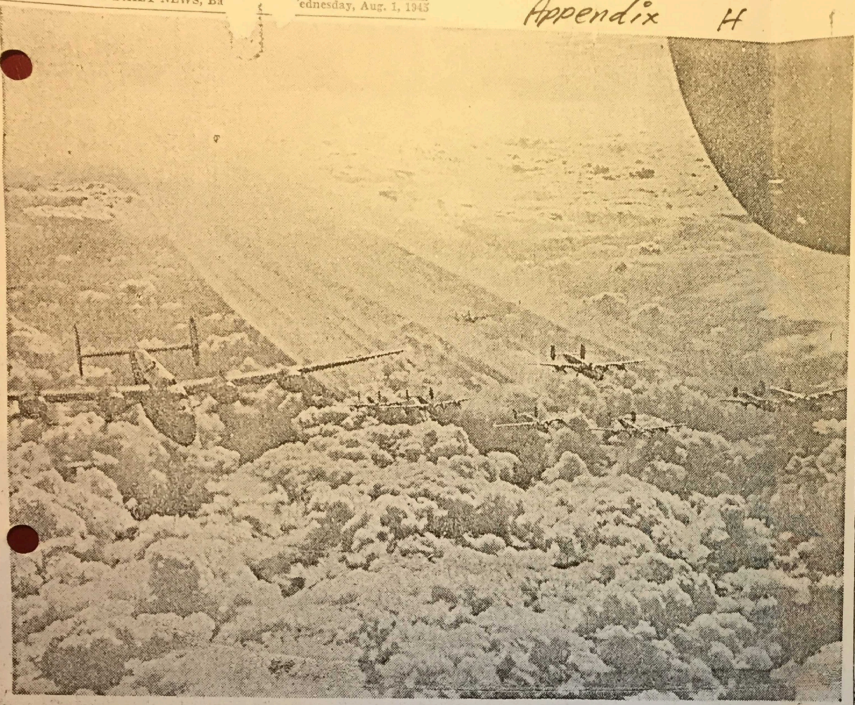
The Weather: Partly Cloudy Today With Scattered Thunder Showers

(Full report on page 2)



451st PLANES IN ACTION OVER EUROPEAN TARGETS—Over 2,000 men and officers of the 451st Bombardment Squadron of the 15th Air Force are now at Dow Field awaiting transfer to various bases of the North Atlantic Division of the ATC. These men who fought as a unit over some of the most vital European targets are recipients of three Presidential Unit Citations and hundreds of other decorations. They comprise one of the most decorated outfits in the Army Air Corps. In the picture at the left above, The Screaming Mimi is seen soaring over smoke which is billowing up 22,000 feet above the Ploesti oil fields, one of the prime objectives of the group. In the center picture the Extra Joker, hit by 20mm. cannon fire is burning fiercely over Markersdorf, Austria. The big B-24 crashed soon after this shot was taken. In the picture at the right the Fertile Myrtile is seen over Almafazuto oil plant on the Danube. Smoke pours up to 18,000 feet from the burning oil plant. (U.S.A.A.F. photos.) Story on Page 14.

Appendix H



451st PLANES WING OVER SOUTHERN GERMANY—Weird cloud formations and vapor trails are created as this squadron of planes of the 15th Air Force fly over their target at 25,000 feet. Some of the boys at Dow Field were in those planes, which created so much havoc with vital industries within the Reich. (U.S.A.A.F. photo.)

Battle Scarred Fighting 451st Observes Anniversary At Dow

The fighting 451st Bombardment Group, veterans of two years of aerial combat in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, and pride of the 15th Air Force, is taking part in the celebration of the 38th Anniversary of the Army Air Forces at Dow Field today. Winners of three Presidential Citations, and so far as is known, the only heavy bomb group winning three Presidential Citations, the members of the 451st symbolize all that is best in the combat units of the AAF throughout the world.

Now stationed at Dow Field, the 451st has been assigned to the 1st Atlantic Division of the ATC, under the command of Brigadier General Lawrence G. Fritz. As fast as they can be screened, classified and processed, they will be assigned to the five major continental bases of the North Atlantic Division, at Presque Isle, Dow, Grenier Field, LaGuardia Field, and Washington National Airport. Some have already gone to take up their new duties with the Air Transport Command.

But even in their new stations, this writer sincerely believes that the boys of the 451st will not have changed—their old allegiance will stick. They will still be members of what they affectionately call "The Four Filthy First." And well they might.

The Four Fifty First is reputed to be the most heavily decorated bomb group in the 15th Air Force—top outfit out of 21. It has won Presidential Citations—more than any other bomb group in Europe. Its personnel has won one DSC, nine Legion of Merit Badges, 25 Silver Stars, 50 Soldier's Medals, one British Distinguished Flying Cross, hundreds of DFC's, thousands of Air Medals, several hundreds of Bronze Stars, and many other decorations.

The members of the outfit proudly wear 12 battle stars—representing twelve major campaigns in which they participated. They flew their planes against almost every country in Europe, including Italy France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland and all the islands of the Mediterranean. They bombed oil wells, refineries, factories, railroads, bridges, roads, ships—in fact, any target they were assigned to attack, no matter how dangerous.

245 MISSIONS

Altogether, the 451st flew 245 combat missions, and dropped over 12,000 tons of bombs on the enemy. Over 8000 men were at one time or another members of the outfit, with the flyers rotating in and out. When their missions were done, they were through, and were replaced by newcomers. The esprit de corps and the morale of the Group have always been exceptionally high.

On an average combat mission, the B-24's of the 451st would fly 38 planes, although they have flown as high as 54. Their last mission flown was on April 27th, just five days before hostilities ceased in the Italian section. This cessation of hostilities was due in no little part to what they had done.

The original commander of the 451st was Col. Robert E. L. Eaton. The group trained under him in the States, and flew under his command until September, 1944. His successor was Col. James Knapp, who remained with the group till December, 1944, when Col. LeRoy L. Stefonowicz assumed command. He is still in charge of the group, while it is being deactivated at Dow Field. Some of the men with the group at Dow, have been with the outfit ever since it was organized at Tucson, Arizona, in May, 1943.

The 451st boasts group commendations from Brig. Gen. Hugo P. Rush, Brig. Gen. William L. Lee, Lieut. Gen. Nathan F. Twining, and Lieut. Gen. Ira W. Eaker. Congratulatory messages complimenting the group on its bombing efficiency have come from General Marshal, Gen. H. H. Arnold, Gen. Touhey Spaatz, and Gen. Mark Clark.

The 451st started overseas in November, 1943, with the B-24's of the group flying the South Atlantic route of the ATC, and winding up in Africa for further training. The ground echelons went over by boat, and landed in Naples, Italy. The two groups united in January, and were originally based at Gioia airdrome, an Italian base with dirt runways.

STRIKE OPPOSITION

They flew their first combat mission on January 30th, against enemy radar installations in Albania. They flew nine missions without casualties, inflicting terrific damage against enemy factories, bridges and installations, but they struck real opposition on their tenth trip into Festung Europa.

Their target was the famous Regensburg aircraft factory in Germany, which was manufacturing one-third of the total production of Messerschmitt 109's, one of Germany's most effective fighter planes. In the raid, a joint operation of the 8th and 15th Air Forces, the 451st was the first group to reach the target, after a terrible battle with enemy fighters. Although the 451st lost six planes in the struggle, they managed to knock down 25 of the enemy fighters. Despite the tremendous opposition from fighter planes and heavy flak, the target was hit squarely and the factory thoroughly gutted by explosion and fire. The plant never again resumed operation, the factory was a total wreck.

The 451st was awarded its first Presidential Citation for the Regensburg raid. There was plenty of trouble on the homeward trek, because a torrential rain had turned the mud runways into a swamp. Only a few of the planes were able to land and the others were scattered all over southern Italy. The group was split up, part of the outfit going to Manduria, and the rest to San Pancrazio. But despite this separation of the squadrons, all formations were made, and the bombing went on without delay.

There were no buildings for either living or operational purposes. The men lived in tents, resting on mud. The work on the planes had to be done outside, in good weather and bad—and more frequently the weather was bad, rather than good. Nevertheless, 15 heavy raids were made against vital targets, including the bloody battlefield of Cassino.

BATTLE 300 NAZIS

On April 2nd, a tremendous raid was launched against enemy ball bearing plants at Steyr, Austria, where unexpectedly heavy enemy opposition developed, when 300 Nazi fighters were battled for better than two hours. Although two B-24's went down in the raid, 30 enemy fighters were known to have been shot down, and another 30 were listed as probables.

On April 5th, the 15th Air Force made the first of its many terrific raids against the Ploesti oil refineries, which at that time were producing nearly one half of the natural oil used by German tanks, automobiles, trucks, and planes. A crash on the take-off at Manduria resulted in 100 per cent casualties for one plane, and held things up for an hour, but the group formed on schedule. Again, they were heavily and bitterly attacked by enemy fighters, with five of the B-24's being shot down. The gunners had a field day, however, shooting down nearly 50 of the enemy crafts.

The 451st received its Presidential Citation for that first Ploesti raid. Later, they were to make twenty more raids against that bitterly defended German target.

On April 9th, the group was reunited again at Castelluccio air base near the great Foggia airdrome. At that time, it was anything but the powerful air base it is now. As the planes landed, they found nothing more than a runway—no buildings, no nothing. Since war could not wait for construction, and they were ordered to go into action immediately, they jumped right into their work. Although weather prevented their flying, they were ready to go into the combat the day after they arrived.

Main targets from the new operating base of the 451st were Ploesti (raided 20 times), Vienna (13 times), Linz, Munich, Friedrichshafen, Budapest, Bucharest, Belgrade, Steyr, and Bolzano—all powerfully defended cities, with hundreds of flak guns and swarms of protecting fighter aircraft.

PLOESTI OIL RAIDS

Toughest cities to attack were Vienna, Ploesti and Munich. Ploesti was particularly well defended, because oil was vital to the success of the Nazi war machine, and it was at Ploesti that the backbone of the Nazi oil system was broken. With 11 refineries in that city, it was a prime target—with top priority for the 15th Air Force. By the time the 451st finished with its oil production and refining was down to practically nothing.

On August 22nd, the target was the Lobau oil refinery near Vienna at Markersdorf. Enemy fighters attacked in force, shooting down seven of the aircraft. The next day the 451st lost nine aircraft out of 24—the losses were terrific. But in spite of the heavy opposition and tremendous losses, the balance of the group fought its way through and hit the target, with excellent bombardment results. The 451st received its third Presidential Citation for this raid.

Later, the 451st was called on to give support to the drives of the Third and Seventh armies in southern France. B-24's were used to fly supplies of gasoline, ammunition and bombs to Lyons, France. Seven supply missions were flown in heavily laden aircraft, despite severe cloud conditions which made flying over mountainous terrain difficult and dangerous.

That fall, synthetic oil plants in central Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary were hit almost daily in successful attempts to deprive the Nazis of fuel for their mechanized army and Luftwaffe. Communications targets and railroad yards were second in priority.

With the shortage of airplane gasoline, fighter opposition dwindled, but as this occurred, anti-aircraft opposition at the major targets became increasingly great. "There were times when we could almost walk on the flak—it was that thick," said one pilot. Vienna was protected by more than 400 heavy flak guns, which took a heavy toll of the 451st bombers, with nine being shot down in one day over that city.

SUPPORT GROUND UNITS

With the beginning of the ground drive by the American Fifth and the British Eighth armies in northern Italy, the 451st began to fly close support missions in conjunction with the ground forces. During April of 1945, 22 missions were flown in 26 days, and bombing accuracy reached a new peak, with 67.7 per cent of all bombs landing within 1,000 feet of the exact pinpoint target.

On April 27th, the 451st made their last raid. On May 2nd, the war in Italy was over, and the men were notified that they were coming home.

Now, assigned to another branch of the Army Air Forces, they will assist in carrying out the logistics mission of the AAF—to get what it is needed where it is needed—when it is needed. The job of the Air Transport Command, transporting high priority men, materiel, mail and aircraft to and from the combat theaters of the world, is vital in modern warfare. The men of the fighting 451st are expected to play an important part in the job.

Their skilled technicians, mechanics, clerks, and flyers will soon fit into the groove of the ATC's smoothly running organization. Although the men of the 451st are sorry to see their organization breaking up, they are going where they will really be of tremendous service to the war effort.

The North Atlantic Division of the ATC is glad to welcome to its ranks, the fighting 451st Bomb Group—top ranking outfit of the 15th Air Force, and the entire ETO.

Officers of the 451st Bomb Group who have reported to date, (and there are still more to come), include the following: Colonel Leroy L. Stefonowicz of Wild Rose, North Dakota, Commanding Officer; Captain Daniel J. Coffey of Jamaica Plan, Mass., Special Service officer; Major Clyde L. Wagner of New Rochelle, New York, Surgeon Captain James H. Broderick of Albany, New York, Dental Officer; Captain Robert E. Davidson of Hidgewood, New Jersey, Armament Officer; Captain Harry T. Fontaine of Brightwaters, Long Island, Information and Education and Public Relations Officer; Captain William Mattes of Bloomfield, N. J., assistant Operations Officer; Captain Edward A. Zraick of Brooklyn, New York, Intelligence Officer; First Lieut. Lloyd H. Lipkey of Washington, D. C., Cryptographic Officer; Captain George C. Millinix, Baltimore, Maryland, Navigator; Captain William McNeil, of Steubenville, Ohio, Chaplain; Lieut. Col. Edward B. Rasmussen, Chicago, Illinois, Operations Officer; Captain Everett Williams, Poplar, Wisconsin, Weather Officer; Lieut. Col. Theodore H. Gorton, St. Joseph, Missouri, Deputy Group Commander; Captain Joe C. Pritchett, Lott, Texas, Radar Officer; Capt. Charles E. Volz, Austin, Texas, Personal Equipment Officer; First Lieut. William L. Evans, Calvert, Texas, Statistical Officer; First Lieut. Lawrence E. McBrearty, Waco, Texas, Medical Administrative Officer; First Lieut. Charles A. Miller, Jr., San Antonio, Texas, Administrative Inspector;

First Lieut. Alton O. Murphy, Temple, Texas, Statistical Officer; Major William H. McGuire, Silver City, New Mexico, Gunnery Officer; Captain Richard E. Prouty, Metaline Falls, Washington, Air Inspector; WO Harold H. Burchell, Portland, Oregon, Technical Inspector; Captain Ralph M. McBeth, Miami, Florida, Communications Officer; First Lieut. John A. O. Winden, Alexander, North Dakota, Flight Control Officer; Captain William M. Dwyer, Wichita, Kansas, Photo Officer; Captain Robert L. White, McCool Junction, Nebraska, Bombardier; First Lieut. David D. Beitmen, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Photo Intelligence Officer; and Captain Henry D. Richardson, Adjutant.

Appendix I

S 76th 44-

A IMMUNIZATION REGISTER[1]

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ARMY SERIAL NO.
Eichhorn, Jr.	Karl F.	35602859

GRADE	COMPANY	REGT. OR STAFF CORPS[3]	AGE	RACE

SMALLPOX VACCINE

DATE	TYPE OF REACTION[6]	MED. OFFICER[3]
2-21-45	VACCINA	[illegible]

TRIPLE TYPHOID VACCINE

SERIES	DATES OF ADMINISTRATION 1ST DOSE	2D DOSE	3D DOSE	MED. OFFICER[3]
1st	2-21-45	MAR 4	MAR 1	[illegible]
2d				
3d				

TETANUS TOXOID

	INITIAL VACCINATION DATE	MED. OFF.[3]	STIMULATING DOSES DATE	MED. OFF.[3]
1st dose	[illegible]	[illegible]		
2d dose	[illegible]	[illegible]		
3d dose	MAY 13 [illegible]	[illegible]		

YELLOW FEVER VACCINE

DATE	LOT No.	AMOUNT	MED. OFF.[3]
9-23-43			

OTHER VACCINES

TYPE OF VACCINE	DATE	MFR'S. LOT NO.	AMOUNT	MED. OFF.[3]
Cholera	8-2-43	9-23-43 Comp		
Typhus	8-2-43	9-23-43		
		9/30/43 Comp.		

BLOOD TYPE A+

[illegible], M. C.
U. S. Army.

16—20202-1

INSTRUCTIONS

1. A record will be kept on this form of all vaccinations given under the direction of medical officers to military and civilian personnel. See AR 40–210 for further details.

2. Appropriate entries will be made at the time prophylactic vaccinations are made *and the entries will be authenticated by the written initials of the medical officer making the inoculation.*

3. In the case of a civilian employee, the character of his employment (clerk, teamster, etc.) and the staff corps or department in which he is employed will be noted in the space *Regiment or Staff Corps.* A brief notation of the status of other civilians will be made in the same space.

4. All officers, warrant officers, nurses, civilians, and others [illegible] vaccination registers will preserve them for reference purposes to be exhibited to examining medical officers at home and to foreign health and quarantine officers upon transfer to overseas duty. See AR 615–250.

5. The duplicate copy of the immunization register will be held for at least 2 years in an alphabetical immunization file maintained with the Medical Department records of the station at which the record was prepared. See AR 40–1005.

6. Record as vaccina, vaccinoid, or immune reaction. If there is no reaction, or if the reaction fails to conform to any of the three recognized types, *vaccination will be repeated.* The use of the term "unsuccessful vaccination" on official records will not be used.

Form 81
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, U. S. A.
(Revised Sept. 23, 1942)

16—20202-1

Appendix J-1

ACHTUNG!

LEBENSGEFAHR!

Heute finden sich unter den Bomben, die uns der totale Krieg auf kriegswichtige Ziele in euerer Nachbarschaft zu richten zwingt, einige mit hoher Sprengwirkung, die nicht augenblicklich bersten.

Das ist beabsichtigt, und diese Bomben sind alle mit Zündern versehen, die sie in verschiedenen Zeitpunkten zur Explosion bringen.

Solche Bomben sind nicht ohne Gefahr zu entfernen, weil niemand weiss, wann sie krepieren werden.

Wir beabsichtigen dadurch die in deutschen kriegswichtigen Indust ie - und Verkehrsanlagen beschäftigten Arbeiter von ihren Werkstätten so lang wie möglich fern zu halten.

Wenn eine derartige Bombe in euer Haus oder in seiner Nachbarschaft niederfiel, so war das nicht beabsichtigt. Doch Ihr seid gewarnt, dass es Stunden, ja sogar Tage währen kann, ehe sie explodiert. Begebt euch deshalb sofort aus ihrer Nähe!

So lange das Volk bereit bleibt, für Hitler und die NSDAP weiter zu kämpfen und weiter zu arbeiten, so lange werden wir genötigt, sein, diese und andere neue Waffen zu verwenden.

Sobald sich aber das Volk entschliesst, mit Hitler und seinem Krieg ein Ende zu machen, dann - und nur dann - kann mit der Zerstörung eingehalten und mit dem Wiederaufbau des wahren Deutschlands begonnen werden.

DAS VOLK MUSS ENTSCHEIDEN!

VERTRIEB: DIE U.S.A.A.F G/109

Appendix J-2

Photographie einer deutschen Untergrund-Zeitung

Das Neue Deutschland

Spende für „DAS NEUE DEUTSCHLAND" ist ein Baustein der Zukunft.

„Die Zukunft gehört jenen, die sich auf [illegible]

Erscheint halbmonatlich — Süddeutsche Ausgabe — 15. Januar 194[illegible]

CAPTURED GERMAN DOCUMENT
21 FEBRUARY 1945
Received

Stoss in's Leere

Die Oberste Heeresleitung spielt ihre letzte Karte aus. An der Westfront versucht Rundstedt in verzweifelten Gegenstössen den Gegner weit genug zurückzudrängen, um Luft für die letzte deutsche Verteidigungslinie, den Westwall, zu schaffen. Die üblichen Anfangserfolge wurden von unserer Propaganda masslos übertrieben, um die gesunkene Stimmung in der Heimat wenigstens vorübergehend aufzupulvern. Dafür verbluten unsere tapferen Soldaten unter dem Eisenhagel der zehnfach überlegenen feindlichen Artillerie und unsere halbzerstörten Städte bleiben ohne jede Luftdeckung. Der Vergleich mit der letzten Ludendorff-Offensive im März 1918 drängt sich einem zwingend auf.

Während aber damals der Krieg im Osten beendet war und die Reichsregierung auf die Kornkammern der von unseren Truppen besetzten Ukraine und Bessarabiens, und auf das Oel Rumäniens rechnen konnte, steht diesmal ein furchtbarer Gegner an der Ostgrenze des Reiches und im Südosten trennen nur noch wenige Kilometer die zweite Hauptstadt Wien von der russischen Dampfwalze.

Dabei gehen die vorhandenen Materialvorräte unweigerlich zu Ende. Da sich Deutschland heute in der Lage einer belagerten Festung befindet, der jede Zufuhr abgeschnitten ist, können die verbrauchten Rohstoffe ja nicht mehr ersetzt werden. Durch drakonische Einsparungen kann dieser Zeitpunkt vielleicht hinausgeschoben werden, aber was hilft das? Unsere Gegner wissen ja genau so gut wie wir, dass keine Opfer und keine Erfindungskraft unserer unglücklichen Bevölkerung diesen Prozess des Dahinschwindens aufzuhalten vermögen.

Warum also diese wahnsinnigen Angriffsschlachten, wozu überhaupt noch die Fortsetzung des zwecklosen Mordens? In welcher Hinsicht kann sich unsere Lage durch Fortsetzung des Krieges bessern? Tag und Nacht geht ein Bombenhagel auf uns nieder, kein Rüstungswerk ist mehr vor Luftangriffen sicher, unser Eisenbahnnetz wird täglich erneut zerrissen, der überlastete, abgenützte Fahrpark kommt den überhohen Forderungen nicht mehr nach. Mangel an Arbeitskräften, an Maschinen und Saatgut ruiniert unsere Landwirtschaft, die Millionen fremder Arbeitssklaven werden immer aufsässiger, und die Hitlermark verliert täglich an Kaufkraft und Wert.

Was hilft da aller Heldenmut unserer Landser, die gegen ungeheure Uebermacht kämpfen und denen dabei die Granaten und Patronen einzeln zugezählt werden. Für jede Kanne Treibstoff ist bereits die Unterschrift eines Stabsoffiziers erforderlich und wer die langen Züge von Heereskraftfahrzeugen gesehen hat, die jetzt von Pferden und Ochsen gezogen werden, dem war das baldige Ende mit Schrecken nicht mehr zweifelhaft.

Nichts kann mehr durch die Fortsetzung des Krieges gewonnen werden, im Gegenteil: unsere Gegner werden immer erbitterter, jeder Kriegstag kostet uns unersetzliche Menschenleben.

Das „Durchhalten" bis zur letzten Möglichkeit bringt aber noch eine andere Gefahr mit sich. Wir alle erinnern uns noch mit Grauen der Hungersnot, die nach Beendigung des letzten Krieges einsetzte, da die Zufuhr von Lebensmitteln in die Hungergebiete Mitteleuropas infolge Mangel an Schiffsraum und den begreiflichen Verteilungsschwierigkeiten nur langsam vor sich gehen konnte. Schuld daran trug natürlich die Regierung, die den Krieg erst beendete, als die vorhandenen Vorräte nahezu völlig erschöpft waren. So starben hunderttausende Erwachsene und Kinder an Unterernährung nach Beendigung der Feindseligkeiten.

Versuchen wir uns einmal auszumalen, was uns bevorsteht, wenn es der NSDAP-Regierung wirklich gelingt, den Krieg militärisch so lange fortzusetzen, bis die totale Erschöpfung der Vorräte die Uebergabe erzwingt. Ganz Deutschland ein Trümmerhaufen, die Bahnlinien zerstört, die Bevölkerung in Notquartieren ohne ausreichenden Schutz vor den Unbilden der Witterung, ohne ausreichenden sanitären Anlagen, kein Kraftstoff um Hilfe in Automobilen und Flugzeugen heranzuschaffen. All dies einem Volke, das durch sechs harte Kriegsjahre erschöpft ist und das nicht nur die Blüte seiner Manneskraft auf unzähligen Schlachtfeldern Europas und Afrikas verloren hat, sondern dessen Greise und Knaben im Volkssturm von feindlichen Panzern wehr- und zwecklos hingeschlachtet werden.

Muss es wirklich dazu kommen?

Wir alle wissen, dass es noch die Möglichkeit einer Rettung für Deutschland gibt. Nicht „Gegenstösse", nicht „Aushalten bis zur letzten Patrone" und ähnliche NSDAP-Parolen, die nur dazu dienen, das ganze Volk dazu zu bringen, sich für die Parteiverbrecher sinnlos zu opfern. Diese rettende Lösung, die einen Wiederaufbau unserer Heimat und Zusammenarbeit mit unseren Nachbarvölkern bringen muss und wird, heisst:

Sturz des Schreckensregimes der nationalsozialistischen Bankrotteure und sofortiger Friede!

Die Nachkriegspläne der NSDAP

Partei „Kernverbände" bereiten Vernichtung des ganzen Volkes vor

Wir haben heute Eines gemeinsam mit den Nazibonzen: das Wissen, dass der Krieg unrettbar verloren ist.

Während aber wir daraus die Schlussfolgerung ziehen, die allein den Weiterbestand Deutschlands und unseres Volkes sichern kann, indem wir entschlossen sind den Frieden ohne weiteren Verzug zu erzwingen, um auf den Trümmern des Dritten Reiches das friedliche, freie Neue Deutschland von Morgen aufzubauen, ist die Erkenntnis der unvermeidlichen Niederlage für jene Hakenkreuzler, für die die Friedensglocken als Armesünderglöckchen läuten, zum Signal für den Beginn des Bürgerkrieges und Brudermordes geworden.

In einem friedlichen freien Deutschland ist für Gesindel vom Schlage der Himmler, Bormann, Schirach, Ley, Buch, Rosenberg und wie sie alle heissen mögen, kein Platz. Angesichts der schon errichteten Galgen, haben diese hohen Herren, deren „Volksverbundenheit" so oft und laut gerühmt wurde, nun endlich ihr wahres Antlitz enthüllt und sich eindeutig gegen das deutsche Volk gestellt: möge ganz Deutschland zum Teufel gehen, wenn nur sie am Leben bleiben, möge das Chaos des Krieges und der Verwüstung anhalten, ja anwachsen, denn Ungeziefer und Reptile gedeihen eben am Besten in Sumpf und Kot.

Weitreichende Vorbereitungen für die Durchführung dieser finsteren Absichten sind bereits erwiesene Tatsache.

Unter Aufsicht zweier Gestapo- und SD-Funktionäre, wurde eine Liste aller jener hoffnungslos kompromittierten Parteiverbrecher angefertigt, die in jedem Fall ihr Schicksal — Tod — von Händen ihrer erbitterten Volksgenossen zu gewärtigen haben. Diese Männer sind natürlich zu Allem fähig, denn wer ohnehin zum Tod verurteilt ist, fürchtet keine Strafe.

Diese Desperadobanden werden jetzt unter dem hochtrabenden Namen „Kernverbände" organisiert und da nach Kriegsende nach jedem Einzelnen dieser Untermenschen gefahndet werden wird, ist in Salzburg, in den Räumen der ASt II, ein Amt eingerichtet worden, das nichts anderes zu tun hat, als diese Brüder mit falschen Ausweispapieren auszustatten. In erster Linie, hat man dabei natürlich Ausweispapiere gefallener Wehrmachtsangehöriger und Bombenopfer verwendet.

Sind die Herren einmal entsprechend getarnt und der Schafspelz übergezogen, gehen die Wölfe auf Raub aus. Geplant ist, dass diese „Kernverbände", nach Zusammenbruch des bewaffneten Widerstandes im Felde, in den Alpen, Tirols und den Forsten Ostdeutschlands Unterschlupf suchen und von dort aus gegen die deutsche Bevölkerung, nach dem Muster der Raubritter des Mittelalters, bewaffnete Ausfälle unternehmen, wobei man es natürlich besonders auf jene Deutsche abgesehen haben wird, welche bestrebt sein werden, in ehrlicher Arbeit und mutigem Willen das Deutschland von Morgen neu aufzubauen.

Bei der Vorbereitung für den beabsichtigten Brudermord und Bürgerkrieg ist man gründlich verfahren. Eine ganze Abteilung des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes — die Abteilung IV — ist damit betraut worden, den sogenannten „NNP" auszuarbeiten. NNP —; hinter den harmlos scheinenden Buchstaben wird das grösste Verbrechen vorbereitet, das je an einem Volke begangen worden ist: „NNP", dahinter verbirgt sich nicht nur all die Abgefeimtheit des Nazipacks, sondern auch ihr offenes Eingeständnis, dass sie den Krieg für Deutschland wo ihnen schon verloren wurde, denn „NNP", das heisst nichts anderes als „Nach-Niederlage-Plan". Es soll also „nach der Niederlage", das heisst nach der Vernichtung des deutschen Heeres und dem Tode von Millionen und Abermillionen Deutscher, dann noch der Rest des deutschen Volkes in einen neuen, noch blutigeren und tückischeren Krieg verstrickt werden, nur um aus der Niederlage Deutschlands eines, ein Einziges zu retten: das längst verwirkte Leben der Hakenkreuz-Schandbuben. In „Fünfergruppen", nach dem Muster der berüchtigten Nihilisten aus den dunkelsten Tagen des Zarentums, sollen diese Ausgeburten der Hölle auszischen und zerstören, was der Krieg noch nicht zerstört hat, verderben und vergiften was dem Frieden noch dienen könnte, und niederreissen, was das deutsche Volk in unsäglicher Mühe neu aufgebaut haben mag. Schon jetzt werden die Führer dieser Gruppen in den Ordensburgen der Partei, dem SD-Schulungslager in Partsch und der Schulungsburg Wannsee bei Berlin, auf Mord, Raub und Totschlag planmässig abgerichtet, um dann im geeigneten Moment — „nach der Niederlage" — wie entfesselte Bestien auf das deutsche Volk losgelassen zu werden.

Almhütten, Blockhäuser und Höhlen in den Tauern, im Zugspitzengebiet, am Arlberg und im Böhmerwald, sind in befestigte Raubritterburgen verwandelt worden. Parteikassen und Gelder, die gesammelt wurden um die unaussprechliche Not der Bevölkerung in diesem fürchterlichen Kriegswinter wenigstens einigermassen zu lindern, sind bei Seite geschafft, und Waffen, Munition und Lebensmittel in ungeheueren Mengen aufgestapelt worden. Man versteht jetzt, warum Opfer von Fliegerangriffen keine Extrarationen mehr bekommen können und warum die Brotration wieder gekürzt werden musste.

Die Tiroler Berge, die durch ihre Unzugänglichkeit und den Mangel von Verbindungswegen, für den Kleinkrieg besonders geeignet sind, sollen zum Hauptbollwerk dieser „Kernverbände" werden, und so versucht man denn jetzt mit allen Mitteln, Versprechungen und Schmeicheleien, die Tiroler Bevölkerung zur Mithilfe zu ködern und zu einer freundlicheren Stellungnahme gegenüber der Partei umzustimmen. Man scheut sich nicht einmal auf längst verstaubte k.u.k. Bühnenrequisiten zurückzugreifen, obwohl Herr Dr. Göbbels sich ja nicht genug daran tun konnte, die Monarchie und ihre „volksfremden" Einrichtungen zu verunglimpfen und lächerlich zu machen. Aufgeputzt mit Spielhahnfeder und Edelweiss sollen nun die widerstrebenden Tiroler Volksgrenadiere und Volkssturmmänner als „Standschützen"- und „Blumenteufel"-Kompanien verkleidet werden, in der Hoffnung den Tirolern das Heckenschützenteufel auf diese Weise schmackhafter zu machen. Aber diese Mätschen scheinen bei den Oesterreichern nicht zu verfangen, denn wie wir hören, verschwinden in Oesterreich täglich neue Volkssturmkompanien auf „unerklärliche" Weise, und wir geben kein Geheimnis preis, wenn wir mit Freude und Stolz heute berichten, dass viele von diesen „Vermissten" bereits den Weg in unsere Reihen gefunden haben.

Darüber soll jedoch nicht die tötliche Gefahr vergessen werden, die diese Nachkriegspläne für das deutsche Volk beinhalten. Seien wir uns dessen bewusst, dass die Partei dabei geradewegs auf das Herz der Nation zielt, wenn jene sogenannten „Kernverbände" als Hauptaufgabe die Vernichtung eben jener positiven Kräfte zugewiesen erhalten, welche es das Ziel und das Bestreben des „Neuen Deutschland" ist, zu erwecken, zu unterstützen und grosszuziehen.

Nur rücksichtslosestes Vorgehen gegen jeden einzelnen der an diesem schändlichen Komplott Beteiligten, kann Deutschland selbst nach dem erlangten Frieden, vor dem völligen Ruin, und das deutsche Volk vor der blutigsten Selbstzerfleischung bewahren, die die Geschichte je gekannt hat. In diesem Kampf können wir auf keine fremde Hilfe bauen, denn nur wir selber kennen die Verbrecher, nicht nur bei Namen, sondern von Angesicht, nur wir selber können ihre Verstecke ausfindig machen und sie herausrücken, und nur wir selber können das ganze Ausmass, und daher auch alle Verzweigungen dieses mörderischen Anschlags gegen Deutschlands Leben erfassen. Wir selber müssen daher dieses drohende Eitergeschwür aus dem Körper unseres Volkes unnachsichtig ausbrennen und wir zweifeln nicht daran, dass uns dies auch gelingen wird, wenn wir nur alle unsere Kräfte und unsere Entschlossenheit daran setzen.

Die „Kernverbände" müssen im Keime ausgerottet werden, noch bevor sie Zeit haben, sich zu einem verhängnisvoll fressenden *faulen Kern* zu entwickeln.

Soldatenbrief

„Wir Soldaten wollen nichts von Politik hören, Vaterlandsliebe braucht uns niemand zu lehren und was die Bonzen zu Hause entscheiden, dafür haben wir zwar mit unseren Knochen geradezustehen, aber gefragt hat uns noch niemand. Eines Tages hiess es „Das Vaterland ruft" und wir bekamen ein Stück Papier in die Hand, damit zogen wir zur Kaserne. Frauen und Kinder weinten und riefen „Komm gesund wieder" und dann kamen Jahre in denen es nichts gab als Blut, Dreck, Hunger und Leichen.

Und da schreiben sie uns von zu Hause und beklagen sich darüber, dass beim letzten Terrorangriff grosser Schaden angerichtet wurde, als ob zerstörtes Gut das Schlimmste wäre, was einem Menschen passieren kann. Alle diese Sachen sind zu ersetzen, wer aber kann mir die sechs verlorenen Jahre ersetzen, die ich, getrennt von allem was mir lieb und teuer ist, in Schutt und Schmutz, allein verbringen musste.

Solange noch eine Hoffnung auf Sieg war, solange wir auf fremdem Boden kämpften und genug Fliegerdeckung und Waffen hatten, ging es ja noch. Jetzt aber sind wir zwar wieder auf heimatlicher Erde, aber ganz anders als man es uns all die Jahre versprochen hat. Jetzt sehen wir unsere Städte in Flammen aufgehen, sehen den Jammer unserer Flüchtlinge und hören täglich neue Geschichten, wie die Parteibonzen sich und ihr gestohlenes Gut feige in Sicherheit bringen, wenn es brenzlich wird. Wir hören von deutschen Frauen und Mädeln die von diesen Heimatheiden in SS-Uniform missbraucht werden oder die 14 Stunden in Fabriken arbeiten mussten, bis sie umfielen. Die Kinder verkommen in Lagern oder leisten Waffendienst. Statt Verstärkungen schickt man uns Kinder und Greise in gefärbten Lumpen statt Uniformen und jedem wahren Soldaten dreht sich der Magen um, wenn er diesen „Volkssturm" nur sieht. Und wir alten Frontschweine sollen weiterkämpfen und immer kämpfen, ohne Entsatz, ohne Urlaub, ohne Post, immer einer gegen zehn und dabei heisst es dauernd Munition sparen und zu Fuss latschen weil kein Sprit mehr für die LKWs da ist. Vom Hunger reden wir ja gar nicht, da organisiert man sich eben etwas, ob im Feindesland oder in der Heimat — Krieg ist Krieg.

Jetzt aber können wir nicht mehr weiter, jetzt muss Schluss gemacht werden. Wir haben es satt! Ich sehne mich nach meiner Frau, meinem Heim! Ich will wieder ein Mensch sein!"

Uffz. J. W.

Bis zum letzten Mann

Heimkehr der Vergeltungswaffe

Herr Goebbels hat uns die verheerende Wirkung der V1 und V2 in England in den grellsten Farben geschildert. Er selbst und seine Propagaddamaschine haben ihr Gesamtprogramm der letzten Monate auf die verheerenden Schläge, die V1 und V2 dem Feind angeblich versetzt haben, aufgebaut.

Inzwischen ist eine Weile verstrichen und die Alliierten haben uns die Sache abgeguckt und die Vergeltungswaffe nachgemacht. Seit mehr als einer Woche regnet es nun V1 über deutsche Städte und Herr Goebbels findet es nicht der Mühe wert, davon auch nur ein Wort zu sagen.

Sollte er aber doch in den nächsten Wochen etwas über die heimgesandte Vergeltungswaffe sagen, weil dies ja schliesslich nicht für ewig zu verbergen ist, dann wird er uns wohl weismachen wollen, dass V1 überhaupt nichts wert ist, fast keinen Schaden anrichtet und ausserdem nur geringe Treffsicherheit besitzt.

So werden wir mit Bomben und mit Lügen überschüttet! All das kann erst ein Ende nehmen bis wir dieses Verbrecherregime gestürzt haben!

Krise in Japan

Die Erfolge der Amerikaner in den Philippinen, sowie die täglichen Bombenangriffe auf Tokio und andere Städte haben zum Sturz der japanischen Regierung geführt. Unser Vertrauensmann in der Wilhelmstrasse berichtet uns von heftigen Strassendemonstrationen in japanischen Städten. Ribbentrop erliess strengen Auftrag alle diese Meldungen zu unterdrücken, da man befürchtet, wenn unser Volk sich darüber klar wird, dass auch unser letzter Verbündeter vor dem Zusammenbruch steht,

Reverse Side

Der Seuchenherd Deutschland

Künftige Generationen als Kriegsopfer

Geist und Körper des Menschen sind unlösbar verbunden. Wenn der Geist erkrankt, folgt unweigerlich die Erkrankung des Körpers. Zwar liegt die Nazipest, die schon Millionen unseres Volkes dahingerafft und unsere Jugend vergiftet hat, unserem jetzigen Elend und unserer Not zu Grunde, zwingend ihr folgend aber, haben in der Heimat auch Seuchen und körperliche Gebresten in erschreckendem Masse um sich gegriffen. Deutschland, das einst zu den gesündesten, hygienisch am höchsten stehenden Ländern der Welt zählte, ist heute zu einem von Epidemien verseuchten Schutthaufen, ohne hygienische Schutzmassnahmen und ohne ausreichende ärztliche Hilfe geworden. Nie noch, seit den düstersten Tagen des Dreissigjährigen Krieges, war die Sterblichkeit in Deutschland eine so hohe wie heute, nie noch gab es in Deutschland so viele Totgeburten, und noch nie gab es solche Verwahrlosung, solches Elend, solchen Jammer, wie sie das deutsche Volk heute erleiden muss.

Hitler, dem „Erbauer des neuen Europas", ist es gelungen, das Rad der Geschichte um 600 Jahre zurückzudrehen und Deutschland in die Nacht des finstersten Mittelalters zu stürzen.

Wie damals, wüten Typhus, Cholera und Ruhr in unseren Städten; Gehirngrippe und Gehirnhautentzündungen fällen täglich Tausende und hungrige Rattenhaufen gehen allnächtlich auf Raubzüge in den Trümmern unserer Heimstätten aus und verschleppen die Seuchenkeime von Stadt zu Stadt, von Dorf zu Dorf und von Haus zu Haus.

Wie es heute um unsere deutsche Jugend und die Volksgesundheit bestellt ist, entnehmen wir am Besten dem vertraulichen Jahresbericht von Prof. Kemper vom Reichsgesundheitsamt, der, als Ehrenmitglied der Partei, wohl kaum unbegründeten Defaitismus bezichtigt werden kann. Da schreibt Prof. Kemper: „... Der allgemeine Gesundheitszustand ... der Bevölkerung, insbesondere aber der Altersklassen zwischen dem 6. und 14. Lebensjahr, und vom 54. Jahr aufwärts, wies im letzten Halbjahr einen bedenklichen Rückgang auf. ... Die durch Vitaminmangel, generelle Unterernährung, Schlafmangel und durch die, Bombenangriffen folgenden nervösen Erscheinungen hervorgerufenen Gesundheitsstörungen, haben vornehmlich bei Kindern unter 12 Jahren aussergewöhnlich ernste Dimensionen angenommen, die sowohl im rein Physischen, wie auch im Psychischen, als pathologisch-bedingte Schwächung der Rasse anzusehen sind ..."

„...Von den im letzten Halbjahr untersuchten 427.500 deutschen Kindern in den Altersgruppen 4 bis 12 Jahre, wiesen 56 v.H. Symptome akuter Rachitis auf, ... die in erster Linie auf Mangel an D-Vitaminen zurückzuführen sind ... Gleichzeitig wurde in diesen Altersgruppen, sowohl geistige, wie körperliche Unterentwicklung beobachtet ... Die Untersuchten schienen verstört, stumpf; Retina- und Muskularreflexe waren stockend, träge ..."

„... Die Sterblichkeitsziffer im Grossdeutschen Reich, immer nur unter Berücksichtigung der rassisch rein-deutschen Bevölkerung und unter Ausschluss der im Kriege Gefallenen oder durch militärische Handlungen, wie Bombenangriffe, Getöteten, stieg im letzten Halbjahr um 6 v.H. über die Durchschnittssterblichkeit im ersten Halbjahr 1944, und steht jetzt 120 v.H. höher als im letzten Halbjahr vor Kriegsausbruch (Jänner-Juni 1939). ... 68 v.H. aller tötlich verlaufenden Krankheitsfälle in der Altersgruppe der 20- bis 30-Jährigen waren tuberkulös (1939, und in derselben Altersgruppe 48 v.H.). ... Die Säuglingssterblichkeit wuchs ständig und hat sich seit 1939 fast verdoppelt. ... Die Zahl der an Gastroenteritis verstorbenen Säuglinge ist um 80 v.H. seit 1943 gestiegen ..." — „Blutarmut und Wachstumsunterbrechungen sind bei 82 v.H. der untersuchten Kinder festgestellt worden ..."

„... Bei Erwachsenen, speziell bei solchen über 45 Jahren, brachte der Mangel an Kalk und Phosphor in der Ernährung eine merkliche Schwächung des Knochengerüstes mit sich, so dass Knochenbrüche aus geringfügigsten Anlässen zur Regel werden ..."

„... Schwächeanfälle, Gedächtnisschwund und Ohnmachtsanfälle, welche besonders bei Arbeitern in Rüstungsbetrieben oft als Simulantentum und Sabotage ausgelegt wurden, sind in den letzten Monaten so häufig geworden, dass man es hier wohl mit einem Massenphenomen physisch-pathologischen Ursprungs zu tun hat. Untersuchungen haben ergeben, dass diese Ohnmachtsanfälle, bewirkt durch die plötzliche Blutentleerung des Gehirns, aus Mangel an Zuckerstoff in der Ernährung zurückzuführen sind und bei Vernachlässigung zu dauernden Bewusstseinsstörungen, wie Amnesien und epileptischen Anfällen führen."

Ein eigenes Kapitel widmet Prof. Kemper der jetzt in Deutschland wütenden Gehirngrippepidemie, von der er schreibt, dass „im kommenden Winter, bei dem Mangel an ärztlichen Personal und Arzneimitteln und der gleichzeitigen Höchstanspannung der Bevölkerung im totalen Kriegseinsatz, mit einer weiteren Ausbreitung der Erkrankung zu rechnen ist und es nicht möglich sein wird, die Ansteckungsgefahr zu lokalisieren." Prof. Kemper fährt fort: „... Die ersten Anzeichen dieser Krankheit (Gehirngrippe), die im Fachblatt der NS-Aerzteschaft vom 6. Oktober, 1944, eingehend beschrieben wurde, äussern sich in schwer-depressiven Zuständen, vollständiger Teilnahmslosigkeit, grosser körperlicher Müdigkeit und Verlust jedes Lebenswillens. Tötlicher Verlauf der Krankheit ist innerhalb der letzten zwei Monate auf 28 v.H. gestiegen ..."

Zusammenfassend gibt Prof. Kemper das folgende Urteil ab: „... Der jetzige, zu schweren Befürchtungen Anlass gebende Gesundheitszustand des deutschen Volkes kann, da in erster Linie auf die durch den Krieg bedingte Lebensweise und Ernährung zurückzuführen ist, nur durch eine sofortige Vitaminbereicherung und Verbesserung der hygienischen und sozialen Verhältnisse, gehoben werden. Die Schäden, welche der Krieg der Volksgesundheit zugefügt hat, haben ein derartiges Ausmass erreicht, dass die Weiterführung des Krieges nicht nur einen Schwund der deutschen Bevölkerung, sondern auch die tiefgreifende Gefährdung der kommenden deutschen Generationen nach sich ziehen würde ..."

Dieser Katastrophenbericht eines der hervorragendsten Nazifunktionäre schildert die Gesundheitslage unseres Volkes sicherlich nicht in zu trüben Farben. Die Wirklichkeit sieht, wenn überhaupt möglich, noch schwärzer aus; die in Prof Kempers Bericht gar nicht berücksichtigte Millionenzahl von Kriegsopfern wird täglich durch neue Tausende von Gefallenen, der halbwüchsigen oder vergreisten Volkssturmbataillone erhöht; täglich sich verstärkende Bombenangriffe des Feindes töten nicht nur jede Stunde Tausende und Abertausende unserer Arbeiter, Frauen und Kinder, in der Heimat, sondern vergrössern ausserdem die Seuchen- und Ansteckungsgefahr durch die Zerstörung der Wasserleitungen und sanitären Anlagen; der überaus strenge Winter dieses Jahres, der erst im Februar und März die grössten Kältewellen bringen wird, rafft täglich mehr frierende, hungernde Menschen dahin, die in ungeheizten, lichtlosen und fensterlosen Höhlen ihre Lungen für den Führer herausfaulen; tausende ungeschulter Frauen und Kinder „im totalen Kriegseinsatz" fallen täglich bewusstlos am Werkband zusammen; Totgeburten, die nur zu häufig sind, erscheinen unsern Frauen ein Segen, unsere Kinder haben, müde, verhärmte, Greisengesichter, ein ganzes Volk von 80 Millionen, die einst gesunde, glückliche Menschen waren, ist zu 62 Millionen nervenkranker, bleicher Schatten geworden.

Dies kann nicht besser, sondern nur schlechter werden, so lange der Krieg andauert, denn, wie Goethe so so richtig erkannt hat: „*Der Krieg ist in Wahrheit eine Krankheit, wo die Säfte, die zur Gesundung und Erhaltung dienen, nur verzehrt werden, um ein Fremdes, der Natur Ungemässes, zu nähren.*" Aerzte und Krankenschwestern, die dringend in der Heimat benötigt würden, stehen in Frontlazaretten um Verwundete so rasch als möglich wieder für den Fronteinsatz „aufzubügeln"; die chemischen Fabriken, welche im Frieden Arzneien herstellten, erzeugen anstatt dessen Explosivstoffe für „Vergeltungswaffen"; Sulfamedikamente und Penicilin notiert, die sensationellen neuen Wundheilmittel, die viele hunderttausende Verwundete der Feindmächte vom Tode gerettet haben, sind unsern Soldaten versagt, weil es heute in Deutschland nur Forschungsinstitute und Laboratorien für neue Waffen, nicht aber für wissenschaftliche Erfindungen gibt ...

Noch lebt das deutsche Volk noch verfügen wir über genügende Kräfte in uns, um ein neues Deutschland aus den Trümmern des Hitlerreiches zu erbauen, doch nur wenn der Krieg noch vor Einsatz des härtesten Winters ein Ende findet. Diesen Kriegswinter kann Deutschlands Zukunft nicht mehr überdauern. Es würden im Winter '45 nicht nur die Jahrgänge 1928 und 1879 in den erschöpften Reihen der Wehrmacht und des Volkssturms fallen, nein, es würden auch die künftigen, die ungeborenen Jahrgänge freier deutscher Bürger dem Nazimoloch geopfert werden.

Noch kann der tötlichen Verseuchung unseres Volkes Einhalt geboten werden, noch können unsere Kinder gerettet werden. Unter friedlichen, normalen Verhältnissen, bei gesunder Ernährung und einer auf Aufbau, anstatt auf Vernichtung gerichteten Arbeit, kann und wird unser Volk wieder gesunden. Es wird wieder Krankenhäuser mit Aerzten und Arzneien geben, warme lichte Wohnungen, und ruhige, von Bomben ungestörte Nächte; die verpesteten Rattenhaufen werden ausgerottet werden und mit ihnen zusammen auch die Nazibanditen, die unser Volk vergiftet und verdorben haben.

Die Rettung kann nur mit dem Frieden kommen, sofortigen Frieden!

Lasst uns den Krieg beenden um Deutschlands Ungeborene vor dem Nazimoloch zu retten!

Betrug am deutschen Volke:

Hitlers Neujahrsrede gefälscht

Ein neuer grosser Schwindel wurde uns vorgemacht, als man uns ankündigte, dass Hitler in der Silvesternacht sprechen werde. Der Reichssender vervollständigte den Betrug indem er die Schallplattenaufnahme der „Führerrede" am 1. Jänner um 0 h 05 in der Aether sandte.

Wir wissen, dass Hitler geistig und körperlich gar nicht imstande wäre eine Rede zu halten. Die letzte wirkliche „Führerrede", jenes grössenwahnsinnige, blutrünstige Gestammel eines hasserfüllten Irrsinnigen, das Hitler am Jahrestag des Münchner Bierkellerputsches dem deutschen Volk, das er seiner nicht mehr würdig erachtete, als Ausdruck seiner gottgleichen Verachtung entgegenschleudern wollte, wurde natürlich von Himmler und Goebbels unterdrückt. Unter sensationellen Umständen gelang es dem „Neuen Deutschland" sich der Plattenaufnahme dieser Rede zu versichern und deren Text wurde wortgetreu und vollständig in unserer Nummer vom 15. Dezember wiedergegeben.

Das war wirklich Hitler und zugleich seine letzte, wie auch seine einzig wahre und unverblümte Botschaft an das deutsche Volk, die Botschaft eines Wahnsinnigen, der den Zusammenbruch seiner Wahnwelt erkannt hat und sich feige in die Nacht seines Irrsinns flüchtet.

Daher, und nachdem die Volks- und Parteigenossen seit dem 20. Juli die Stimme des Führers nicht mehr gehört hatten und der seither sehr selten vor der Oeffentlichkeit erscheinende „Führer" von bösen Zungen als ein Doppelgänger Adolf Hitlers bezeichnet wurde, erschien es Herrn Goebbels äusserst wichtig, die Stimme Hitlers doch wieder einmal laut werden zu lassen. Der Moment war gut gewählt, in der Silvesternacht, 5 Minuten nach Mitternacht, ist man gewöhnlich nicht mehr sehr nüchtern. Müdigkeit und Alkohol geben die richtige Vorbedingung um die Hörer wenig kritisch und wenig auf merksam zu machen.

Der aufmerksame Hörer jedoch muss sofort bemerkt haben, dass diese Stimme nicht die Stimme Hitlers war. War auch das Pathos, das Hitlers Reden so charakteristisch machte, ziemlich gut nachgeahmt, so konnte man dennoch an bestimmten Stellen deutlich erkennen, dass dieses Pathos gezwungen und ganz unnatürlich klang. Die Rede war ungewöhnlich kurz und im rhethorischen Aufbau grundverschieden von früheren Reden.

Selbstverständlich lastet alle Schuld auf den Juden und Plutokraten, nicht aber auf der SS und Gestapo, die das deutsche Volk unterdrücken. Selbstverständlich werden wir den Krieg gewinnen, weshalb sich die NSDAP auch jetzt schon vorbereitet, im Falle der Niederlage in der Illegalität verschwinden zu können.

Alles was in dieser Rede gesagt wurde, war Lüge, nichts als Lüge. Die Stimme war gefälscht und auf Schallplatten aufgenommen, damit sie vorher von den Experten der Fälschung geprüft werden konnte.

Ein Flugblatt der sogenannten „Adolf Hitler Bewegung" will wissen, dass „der verräterische Gauleiter Wagner die Stimme des Führers nachgeahmt hat".

Diese „Adolf Hitler Bewegung" ist ein sonderbares Neugebilde der reaktionären Elemente, die sich gegen Himmler stellen und angeblich „ihrem Führer Adolf Hitler treu geblieben sind". Sie behaupten Beweise dafür zu haben, dass Hitler und Göring gefangengehalten werden und von Himmler verraten wurden. Es wird davon gesprochen, dass Generalmajor Fegelein diese neue Nazibewegung anführt.

Wer immer auch wen betrügt, das deutsche Volk wird von beiden betrogen! Wir glauben nicht mehr an die Lügenpropaganda, weder der einen, noch der anderen! Wir wollen frei sein, von Hitler und Himmler!

„Krieg, Handel und Piraterei"

In den letzten Monaten fanden regelmässig Sitzungen statt, an denen Dr. Bosse als Vertreter des Reichsministeriums für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion, und leitende Persönlichkeiten der wichtigsten Industrien teilnahmen. SS-Obergruppenführer Dr. Scheid vertrat die Partei. Gegenstand der Besprechungen waren die nötigen Massnahmen im Falle der nunmehr als unvermeidlich zu betrachtenden Niederlage. Jeder der anwesenden Grossindustriellen erhielt seine Aufgaben zugewiesen, die alle dem Endziel dienen sollen, erhebliche Kapitalien für Partei- und Wiederaufrüstungspläne im neutralen Auslande entsprechend getarnt bereitzustellen.

Dr Scheid wies besonders auf bestehende Patentverträge der Kruppwerke und der I. G. Farben einerseits, und der amerikanischen Carnegiewerke, U. S. Steel Corporation und der American Tube Corporation andererseits hin. Dabei erwähnte auch die schon früher erfolgte Ansammlung und Tarnung von Dollarguthaben durch die Hamburg-Amerika Linie und die Zeisswerke.

Dr. Bosse erinnerte die Industriellen an ihre künftigen Pflichten, die vornehmlich in der Finanzierung der Partei bestehen werden, sobald diese nach dem militärischen Ende des Krieges ihre Geheimtätigkeit aufgenommen haben wird. Die vorbereiteten Gebirgsverteidigungsstellen würden noch jahrelang Widerstand leisten und eigene „Femegruppen" würden mit allen jenen abrechnen, die sich den Befehlen der geheimen Parteileitung widersetzen oder gar mit den Feindmächten Kompromisse schliessen. Dr Bosse erwähnte in diesem Zusammenhang besonders, dass einige Eisenbahnbeamte im Aachener Gebiet bereits von Femegruppen hingerichtet wurden, weil sie ihre Posten auch unter den amerikanischen Besatzungsbehörden beibehalten hätten.

Dr. Bosse machte in einer weiteren Sitzung am 16. Dezember in Leipzig die Mitteilung, dass die Reichsregierung schon jetzt an „verlässliche" Industrielle grössere Beträge in fremden Währungen zuweisen würde, um es ihnen zu ermöglichen nach dem Zusammenbruch Auslandsstellen mit ausreichender Fundierung zu errichten. Da die deutsche Schwerindustrie mit feindlicher Ueberwachung zu rechnen haben werde, sollten „unabhängige" kleine Unternehmungen für Forschung und Experimentierung geschaffen werden, deren Aufgabe es sein wird, geheime Rüstungs- und Waffenpläne fortzuführen und vor dem Feinde zu verbergen.

Als Teilentschädigung für ihre „patriotische" Haltung wurde einigen Grossindustriellen ermöglicht, schon jetzt bedeutenden Grundbesitz in Mitteldeutschland unter Decknamen zu kaufen und mit entwerteten Hitlermark zum Friedensschätzpreis zu bezahlen; weiterhin wurde ihnen gestattet, wiederum unter Decknamen, Häuser und Grundstücke in der Schweiz und in Schweden zu erwerben.

Einige Industrielle machten sich auch erbötig „besonders gefährdete" Parteileiter unter falschen Namen in ihren Betrieben unterzubringen.

Eine schmutzige Hand wäscht die andere.

Edelweiss-Jugend

Mit Freuden begrüssen wir die Nachricht, dass die „Edelweiss-Jugend" immer mehr und mehr Anhänger und Mitkämpfer gewinnt und nunmehr schon grossangelegte Aktionen gegen die Nazibanditen unternimmt. In allen Teilen des Reiches, im Hinterland wie an der Front, haben sich die jungen Männer und Mädchen, Angestellte, Arbeiter und Bauern, im Kampfe gegen das Regime zusammengefunden.

Wir alle wissen, dass die Zukunft eines Landes in den Händen der Jugend liegt. Die Bildung dieser Widerstandsgruppen im Zeichen der weissen Gletscherblume erhöht daher unsere Zuversicht und unseren Kampfgeist, da es uns nunmehr gewiss ist, dass die Jugend auf unserer Seite kämpft. Wir wir, so haben auch sie erkannt, dass das Regime der Hitler und Himmler nur zum Verderben und Untergang unseres Volkes führen kann. Die deutsche Jugend im „Edelweiss-Bund", ohne Unterschied der Partei oder politischen Ueberzeugung, kennt nur ihren unüberwindlichen Hass gegen die Unterdrückungsmethoden der NSDAP und ihren toten Glauben an Freiheit und Frieden. Sie ist der Grundstock der Befreiung und der Grundstein des neuen Deutschland der nahen Zukunft.

Fremdenverkehr im Dritten Reich

Fremdenverkehr gibt es keinen mehr in Deutschland, seit die Nazis zur Macht kamen. Aber dafür wimmelt es jetzt in Deutschland von „Sondergästen des Führers" aus dem Süden, Osten und Norden.

Noch vor zwei Jahren konnte sich unsere Propaganda nicht genug daran tun, die verschiedenen Exilregierungen mit einem mitleidigen Lächeln der Verachtung zu verhöhnen. Heute, wie in Ailem andern, ist auch hier der Spiess umgedreht worden. Die Regierungshäupter und Diplomaten unserer einstigen „Waffenbrüder" haben schon lange ihre Köfferchen gepackt und sitzen jetzt, anstatt ihren eigenen Völkern, dem deutschen Volk am Hals, ein weiteres Gewicht, das den Mühlstein, den uns die Nazis umgehängt haben, noch mehr beschwert.

Doch während unserem Volk der Brotkorb immer höher und höher gehängt wird, während wir unsere Gürtel immer enger schnallen müssen, leben diese Parasiten, aus „propagandistischen Gründen" noch immer in Saus und Braus.

Der lebende Leichnam des senilen Petain vegetiert prunkvoll im Siegmaringer Schloss, der Hanswurst Mussolini, zusammen mit seinem schon leicht in Verwesung übergegangenen Hofstaat, hat es sich im Zürser Hof am Arlberg bequem gemacht; die Rumänen, Bulgaren und Ungarn und das restliche Balkangesindel treiben Wintersport mit Hauptquartier Grand Hotel in Kitzbühel, und die besorgte Bevölkerung, die erst kürzlich vom parteiamtlicher Stelle darauf aufmerksam gemacht wurde, dass der totale Kriegseinsatz jetzt weitere Einsparungen und Opfer erfordere, kann zusehen, wie sämtliche Luxuswagen mit „Diplomatenrationen" für diese Nobelflüchtlinge vorfahren und ausgeladen werden.

„Reserviert für Diplomaten" steht gross an der Eingangstür des Kitzbühler Grand Hotels, aber eine Tiroler Hand hat darüber gemalt:

„Reserviert für Verräter e.D."

Dem neuen Deutschland

Fünf Jahre Not, wie noch kein Volk sie trug
Fünf Jahre Kot, Gebirge der Gemeinheit!
Vernichtet, was an stolzer Glut und Reichtum
Was uns an Grösse deutscher Geist erstritt
Und doch — auch wenn der Ekel noch so
[würgt —
Es war doch, war doch — oder ist's Lug
[gewesen? —
Es war doch unser Land! Und doch dies Endes
Nicht eine Kraft, die Rettung uns verbürgt
Die Herzen auf! Wer sehen will, der sieht
Die Kraft ist da, vor der die Nacht entflieht

(Dietrich Eckart)

Kriegsgefangenenfürsorge

Soldaten!

Täglich geraten Tausende von euch in Kriegsgefangenschaft, viele andere vertrinken sich über die Schweizer oder die schwedische Grenze und werden auf Kriegsdauer interniert. „Das Neue Deutschland" setzt alles daran, das Los dieser Gefangenen zu verbessern, sofern diese keine Nationalsozialisten sind.

In allen Ländern gibt es heute organisierte Gruppen guter Deutscher, die eines gemeinsam haben, — den Hass gegen das Hitler-Regime. Diese Gruppen nehmen sich in vorsorglichster Weise aller deutschen Kriegsgefangenen an, die beweisen können, dass sie keine Nazis sind, und sorgen für Liebesgaben, Sonderverpflegung, erleichterten Briefverkehr u.s.w.

Schneidet daher untenstehende Erklärung aus und weiset sie im Falle der Gefangennahme vor. Euer Leben und eure Zukunft mag davon abhängen!

Ausschneiden! Aufheben!

Erklärung

Ich bin kein Nazi oder Kriegsverbrecher, sondern ein ehrlicher deutscher Soldat, der sein Vaterland liebt. Ich bin ein Anhänger der Bewegung „Das Neue Deutschland" und hoffe auf baldigen Frieden.

Appendix J-3

Photographie einer deutschen Untergrund-Zeitung

Das Neue Deutschland

Mitglieder erhalten die Zeitung kostenlos zugestellt. Jede Spende für „DAS NEUE DEUTSCHLAND" ist ein Beweis der Zukunft.

„Die Zukunft gehört jenen, die sich auf sie vorbereiten!"

Erscheint halbmonatlich

Norddeutsche Ausgabe

15. Februar 1945

Der Trennungsstrich

„Vertrauen auf die Denkart des Feindes muss mitten im Kriege noch übrig bleiben, weil sonst kein Friede geschlossen werden kann."

Das schrieb Immanuel Kant, einer der grössten Denker aus einer besseren deutschen Vergangenheit, vor etwas mehr als 140 Jahren, inmitten der napoleonischen Kriege.

In Zeiten wie den jetzigen, in denen die ganze Welt in Hass und Zwietracht zerrissen und zersplittert ist und Volk gegen Volk, Bruder gegen Bruder und Kinder gegen Eltern gestellt sind, ist es gut der Kant'schen Einsicht zu gedenken, denn nur aus dem gemeinsamen, alle politischen und weltanschaulichen Grenzen und Gegensätzlichkeiten überbrückenden menschlichen Erleben können wir die Hoffnung und den Mut zur Rettung unserer selbst, zur Rettung Deutschlands und damit auch gleichzeitig der ganzen Welt finden.

Denn es ist nicht nur Deutschland, das heute zu Tode krank darniederliegt, es ist die ganze Menschheit, die aufs Aeusserste verwirrt, vom Wege der Vernunft abgeirrt ist und nun, verloren im nächtigen Dunkel der Triebwelt, furchtsam tappend und in schmerzerfülltem Ringen versucht, sich wieder ihrer selbst zu besinnen.

Diese beklemmende Furcht, dieses angstvolle Suchen, sie erfüllt jeden von uns, der nicht in störrischer Verschlossenheit, erniedrigt und seiner menschlichen Würde beraubt durch die Greuel einer alles verneinenden Ungeistigkeit, an sich und der Welt verzweifelt.

Hier ist es wo der grosse Trennungsstrich zu ziehen ist, der Trennungsstrich zwischen den Verirrten, die die Rückkehr zur Vernunft und Menschlichkeit suchen, und jenen, den *unsühnen Schuldigen*, die ihrer eigenen Abwegigkeit und Verderbtheit nicht mehr bewusst, sich der Rückkehr verweigern.

Es ist — um es ganz eindeutig auszudrücken — ganz einfach *der Trennungsstrich* zwischen Leben und Tod.

Denn wer nicht mit der Zeit — und das ist historisch gesehen die Wirklichkeit schlechthin — Schritt hält, verdammt sich selber zum Stillstand und damit zum Tode. Die Jahre der grossen Wende, in denen der Zerfall des christlichen Wertsystems, — der ja bis tief in die wilhelminische Aera verfolgt werden kann —, vor sich gegangen war, haben eine immer beschleunigtere Wandlung des nationalen und individuellen Geschehens nicht nur in Deutschland, sondern im ganzen Abendland mit sich gebracht, und gerade die letzten, jene düstersten Jahre in Deutschlands Geschichte, die im Zeichen rechtloser Macht und machtlosen Rechtes standen, gerade diese haben dazu beigetragen den toten Punkt zwischen zwei Geistesepochen zu überwinden, ja vielleicht bedurfte es sogar dieses gewaltsamen Anstosses um uns loszureissen vom überholten Ueberlieferten und uns hinüberzuführen in eine neue Wirklichkeit.

Wir ahnen diese neue Wirklichkeit inmitten allen kriegerischen Geschehens, denn auch der Friede muss erst erkämpft werden und die Saat einer positiven, wirklichkeitsnahen Denkart, des stets sich erneuernden Glaubens an die menschliche Vernunft bedarf zu ihrer Entwicklung des blutgedüngten Bodens, den die Vernichtung der negativen Kräfte und die endgültige Auseinandersetzung mit dem Ungeistigen hervorgebracht hat. So entwickelte sich unser Schicksal im Geiste der Zeit selbst in Augenblicken, da wir vermeinten still zu stehen und schon dem Tode verfallen zu sein, und die Entwicklung dieses Zeitgeistes ist dabei durchaus nicht auf uns allein beschränkt geblieben. Denn es ist die dem Zeitgeist innewohnende Kraft, welche alle Völker verbindet und ihr Los verknüpft, sie verbindet, ungeachtet aller eigenkreisigen Bestrebungen und rückläufigen Strömungen, und die Geschicke der Nationen bestimmt. Und selbst die Vertreter der drei feindlichen Grossmächte, die in diesen Tagen in der Yaltakonferenz über das Schicksal Europas, und im Besonderen, über unser eigenes Schicksal zu bestimmen glaubten, auch sie müssen sich der Unverrückbarkeit dieses höheren Gesetzes beugen, das allein den Frieden gewährleisten kann.

Und weil diese Erkenntnis einer dem menschlichen Willen entnehmen höheren Gewalt tröstend und stärkend die Zukunft all jenen eröffnet, die dem Rufe des Geistigen folgend, um die Wiederherstellung menschlicher Würde und des Glaubens an die menschliche Vernunft ringen, deshalb können wir hoffnungsfroh und zuversichtlich der neuen, der kommenden Welt entgegenblicken. Denn keine Nation steht für sich allein; es gibt ein Gemeinsames das sie untereinander verbindet, welches doch wieder einer jeden selbsteigen ist. Es ist der Geist der menschlichen Entwicklung, der, des grossen Sterbens müde, die Kämpfer, hüben, wie drüben, in die Knie zwingt und in den prophetischen Worten Paulus des Apostels die Todesangst aus unsern Herzen bannt und den Frieden einer neuen Welt verkündet

„Fürchte Dich nicht, denn wir sind alle noch hier."

Parteiparole: Totaler Untergang

Friedensangebot der Alliierten ausgeschlagen

Ein neuerlicher Friedensschritt des Vatikans ist von unserer Verbrecherregierung soeben vereitelt worden. Den sicheren Untergang vor Augen, beharren die Parteibankrotteure noch auf ihrem Standpunkt, dass Verhandlungen erst dann möglich sind, wenn die Gegner das Weiterbestehen der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur anerkennen. Da die gegebenen Regime verbündeten Mächte natürlich genau wissen, dass sich die weitaus grössere Mehrheit des deutschen Volkes längst innerlich von der NSDAP abgewendet hat und die Widerstandskräfte der Himmlertruppen zu Ende gehen, so denken sie nicht daran, ihren so oft und immer wieder zum Ausdruck gebrachten Willen zu ändern: Frieden mit guten Deutschen jederzeit, mit Nationalsozialisten niemals!

Unser Vertrauensmann im Auswärtigen Amt berichtet soeben, dass Anfang Februar der deutsche Botschafter beim Vatikan, Freiherr v. Weizsäcker, Einsicht in die Friedensbedingungen nehmen konnte, die von den Regierungen Amerikas, Englands und Russlands als Grundlage für die sofortige Beendigung des Krieges betrachtet werden. Der persönliche Berater Roosevelts, Mr. Hopkins, hatte sie dem Kardinalstaatssekretär als Antwort auf einen Brief des Papstes überbracht.

Weizsäckers Bericht an die Reichsregierung lässt keinen Zweifel darüber offen, dass es diese Bedingungen im Hinblick auf die heutige Lage als überaus günstig erachtete. Da er ja ausserhalb des Machtbereiches der Gestapo lebt, wagte er es, aus seiner Meinung kein Hehl zu machen.

Wir bringen im folgenden einen Auszug der wichtigsten Punkte:

1) Die Einheit und Unabhängigkeit Deutschlands wird gewahrt, jedoch nur unter Voraussetzung der Ausrottung des Nationalsozialismus.

2) Die Unabhängigkeit der Tschechoslowakei und Oesterreichs wird wiederhergestellt.

3) Russland und Polen erhalten weiteren Zutritt zur Ostsee im Raume Ostpreussens.

4) Die deutschsprachige Bevölkerung im Sudetengebiet, in Ostpreussen und Elsass-Lothringen, erhält Gelegenheit, mit ihrer Habe in andere Teile des Reiches zu übersiedeln. Grundbesitz wird abgelöst.

5) Militärische Besetzung Deutschlands endet mit der Unterzeichnung des Friedensvertrages, doch werden gewisse, noch zu bestimmende Luftstützpunkte innerhalb der Reichsgrenzen bis zum Ende der wirtschaftlichen und politischen Kontrolle durch Beauftragte eines neutralen europäischen Verbandes, den alliierten Nationen zur Verfügung gestellt bleiben.

6) Ein Dreijahresplan zum Wiederaufbau der zerstörten Gebiete Europas wird im Einvernehmen mit deutschen Behörden ausgearbeitet werden. Die hierzu nötigen Mittel werden durch übernationale Anleihen aufgebracht. Deutschland haftet Sachgüter als Entschädigung für Zerstörungen durch deutsche Truppen.

7) Die deutsche Stahlindustrie darf für den Inlandsverbrauch nur eine noch festzusetzende Quote ihrer Produktion verkaufen, die dem deutschen Friedenskonsum entspricht, um zu verhindern, dass die Erzeugung von Waffen oder Munition im Geheimen wieder aufgenommen werde. Der Erzeugungsüberschuss wird an andere Staaten im Austausch gegen Rohstoffe abgeführt.

8) Die allgemeine Wehrpflicht und der Arbeitsdienst, sowie militärische Jugenderziehung wurden abgeschafft. Eine Miliztruppe ohne schwere Waffen wird aufgestellt. Nationalsozialistische Parteifunktionäre, sowie Angehörige der SS, sind von der Miliz, sowie von jedem öffentlichen Amt ausgeschlossen.

9) Namentliche Listen von Parteiverbrechern werden unter Mitwirkung deutscher Stellen angelegt. Der neue europäische Verband wird übernationale Gerichtshöfe für ihre Aburteilung einsetzen.

10) Alle Parteistellen werden aufgelöst; ihr Vermögen verfällt dem deutschen Staate. Die deutsche Regierung verpflichtet sich, an der rücksichtslosen Ausmerzung aller bestehenden oder künftigen nationalsozialistischen Keimzellen tatkräftigst mitzuwirken.

Ribbentrop und Himmler lehnten nicht nur in schroffster Form ab, sondern tadelten Baron Weizsäcker sogar dafür, dass er diese Friedensaktion scheinbar gebilligt und unterstützt habe. Wenige Tage später veröffentlichte die „Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" einen Artikel, des Inhaltes, dass Friedensangebote nur an Hitler selbst gerichtet sein dürfen.

Jetzt donnern die russischen Kanonen vor Berlin die Antwort.

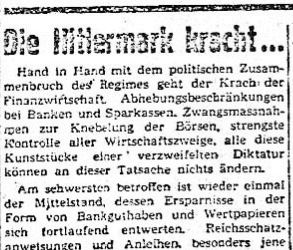
Die Hitlermark kracht...

Hand in Hand mit dem politischen Zusammenbruch des Regimes geht der Krach der Finanzwirtschaft. Abhebungsbeschränkungen bei Banken und Sparkassen, Zwangsmassnahmen zur Knebelung der Börsen, strengste Kontrolle aller Wirtschaftszweige, alle diese Kunststücke einer verzweifelten Diktatur können an dieser Tatsache nichts ändern.

Am schwersten betroffen ist wieder einmal der Mittelstand, dessen Ersparnisse in der Form von Bankguthaben und Wertpapieren sich fortlaufend entwerten. Reichsschatzanweisungen und Anleihen, besonders jene die auf Hitlermark lauten, d.h. die seit 1933 zur Ausgabe gelangten, werden seit Wochen an den Börsen zu sinkenden Kursen angeboten und nur von den Staatsinstituten in kleinsten Posten aufgenommen. — Der Notenumlauf hat 50 Milliarden weit überschritten und die Goldbestände der Reichsbank stehen nur mehr auf dem Papier, denn das Gold ist längst ins neutralen Ausland verschoben und dort auf den Namen bevorzugter Parteibonzen erlegt worden.

Der Grundbesitzer und der Industrielle sind besser daran, denn ihnen verbleiben ja Sachwerte und die Hoffnung ihre Hypotheken und Kredite in entwerteten, billigen Hitlermark zurückzuzahlen. Wenn sich die Herren nur nicht täuschen... Hitler hat zwar seinen angeblich bevorzugten Mittelstand und die Arbeiterschaft verraten, aber „Das Neue Deutschland" wird ihnen zu gegebener Zeit zu ihrem Recht verhelfen.

Und zwar bald...



Volksgrenadier, Vorwärts Marsch!

Die Meute klafft

„Das Schwarze Korps" ist uns böse

Mut zur Selbstbehauptung und kämpferische Entschlossenheit im Dienste wahrer Vaterlandsliebe wird im Dritten Reich nicht gern gesehen. So ist es nur natürlich, dass unsere Bewegung, unsere Anhänger und unsere Zeitung von Anfang an und von Seiten der Nazibehörden nicht nur mit brennendem Hass, sondern auch mit schmeichelhaftester Aufmerksamkeit bedacht wurden. Das hat uns zwar gratis und kostenlos eine Menge Reklame gemacht und dem DND viele neue Anhänger gewonnen, wir wollen aber nicht leugnen, dass dieses nachdrückliche Interesse uns manchmal recht unangenehm war und uns oft zu unbequemen Sicherungsmassnahmen gezwungen hat. So manche unserer Vorkämpfer starben den Märtyrertod in Himmlers Todesfabriken, oft konnten wir unsere Zeitung nur verspätet herausbringen und einige Male mag es sogar vorgekommen sein, dass eine Nummer ganz ausfiel, wenn uns die Gestapo gar zu knapp auf den Fersen war. Aber völlig zum Schweigen konnte man uns nie bringen, auch nicht in den dunkelsten Tagen der Bedrückung.

Dass unsere Bewegung in wachsendem Masse von den breiten Schichten des deutschen Volkes getragen wird und unsere Zeitung eine tiefbegründete innere Verbundenheit mit dem Volkswillen gefunden hat, dafür zeugen in beredtester Weise die immer häufiger und heftiger werdenden Angriffe gegen DND in der Nazipresse und dem Nazirufunk. Wenn ein Grosses geboren wird und der starke Wind eines neuen Glaubens im Begriffe steht den schauerigen Tand und Trödel des Dritten Reiches hinanzufegen, dann kreischt und geifert eben all das kleine Gezücht, das sich in den blutbefleckten, düsteren Ritzen und Ecken der Nazihemmnisse noch verborgen hält.

Dass wir auch in den Reihen der Wehrmacht, und da wohl besonders unter unsern Frontsoldaten, viele Anhänger und Freunde gewonnen haben, dass bewies uns, zwingender als es selbst die spontane Bildung zahlreicher DND-Soldatengruppen tun konnte, das Oktoberheft No. 371 der „Mitteilungen für die Truppe", das sich fast ausschliesslich mit der Ausgabe des DND vom 15. August befasst und in zwei Seiten verlegenen Gestammels unsere Soldaten vor dieser „Ausgeburt hochverräterischer Gesinnung" zu warnen meint.

Der Grossangriff gegen uns aber erfolgte — wie es sich ja gebührt — in Himmlers Leibblatt, im „Schwarzen Korps" vom 11. Januar, das Gift und Galle über die ganze Titelseite verspritzt und der DND-Nummer vom 15. September sechs Spalten treudeutscher Erbitterung und geharnischten Grimmes widmet. Und fast will es uns scheinen, als ob die Ursache zu diesem grossaufgezogenen Tobsuchtsanfall recht offensichtlich wäre: es war wohl kaum ein Zufall, dass der Selbstmord Generalfeldmarschalls von Kluge, den wir eben in jener unter Attacke stehenden Septembernummer des DND meldeten, und der durch vier Monate verheimlicht worden war, gerade Ende Dezember, wohl unter dem Druck der durch uns in Bewegung gesetzten öffentlichen Meinung, amtlich zugegeben wurde.

Das hat denn auch dem „Schwarzen Korps" einen Schrei ohnmächtiger Wut entlockt; das Getasel betitelt sich „Uns kann es recht sein...", da aber der Angstschweiss klamm und feucht jedem Satz und jedem Wort dieses Machwerks anhaftet, so klingt uns dieser betont überlegene Titel eher wie das aufgetrumpfende Pfeifen des kleinen Jungen, der sich in dunkler Nacht ängstlich an der Kirchhofmauer vorüberschleicht. Der kleine Junge dürfte in diesem Falle wohl Herr Gunter d'Alquen, Hauptschriftleiter des „Schwarzen Korps", selber gewesen sein, denn die hochtrabende Rabulistik seines Schwätzertums ist unverkennbar.

Die Herren von der Nazipresse haben ebenso jeden Kontakt mit einem Volke verloren, das inmitten von Tod und Vernichtung, inmitten von Kälte, Hunger und brutalem Terror, „das bisschen Dasein", von dem Herr d'Alquen so geringschätzig spricht, längst aufgesagt hat, in der Hoffnung und in dem Bestreben wenigstens seinen Kindern ein Deutschland der Zukunft zu retten und aufzubauen, in dem „das bisschen Dasein" wieder lebens- und erstrebenswert sein wird.

Für dieses Ziel — und nur für dieses Ziel — ist das deutsche Volk bereit und entschlossen jedes Opfer zu bringen und jeder Gestapodrohung zu trotzen, es ist bereit und entschlossen den Weg den wir ihm weisen zu folgen, auch wenn Herr d'Alquen in ängstlichem Bestürzen Pech und Schwefel auf die Häupter dieser Aufrechten, dieser wahren Deutschen herunterbeschwört und so mancher mutige Mann seinen Mut, seinen Glauben mit dem Leben und qualvollen Martern in den Folterkammern der Gestapo bezahlen musste. Ja, Herr d'Alquen, ihre Häschen haben einige unserer Mitgliedskarten eingenäht in Matratzen und in andern Verstecken finden können, aber wenn Sie, verehrter Herr Sturmbannführer, heute nacht sorgfältig die Türe ihres Schlafgemachs versperren und verstohlen unters Bett lugen, dann denken Sie an alle jene DND-Mitglieder die ihre Schergen nicht gefunden haben!

Laut Herrn d'Alquen ist DND natürlich nichts anderes als abgefeimteste, niederträchtigste „Feindpropaganda". Das nimmt uns weiter nicht Wunder. Das deutsche Volk weiss es besser und uns kann es sicher auch recht sein.

Wir freuen uns mitteilen zu können, dass unsere Bewegung ab 1. März eine weitere Zeitung veröffentlichen wird. Sie wird unseren Mitgliedern und Freunden in gleicher Weise wie diese Blatt zugestellt werden. Gleich auf den Weg!

Unser Programm

Manifest der Bewegung „Das Neue Deutschland"

Wir, die verantwortlichen Leiter der Bewegung „Das Neue Deutschland", haben uns in geheimen Beratungen zusammengefunden und nach einmütigem Beschluss feierlich geschworen:

Wir wollen alle unsere Kräfte und, wenn nötig, auch unser Leben dafür einsetzen, die deutsche Nation vor dem Untergang zu retten und wieder frei und stark zu machen, würdig der grossen Traditionen unseres Vaterlandes und ebenbürtig allen Kulturvölkern der Erde.

Das folgende Aktionsprogramm wurde einstimmig festgelegt:

1. Wir wollen alles tun, um den sinnlosen Krieg, der unsere Heimat zu vernichten droht, sobald als möglich zu beenden.

2. Die nationalsozialistische Diktatur, muss restlos und auf immer beseitigt werden; ihre Führer müssen für die am deutschen Volke verübten Verbrechen die gerechte Strafe erleiden.

3. Nach Beendigung der Feindseligkeiten wird unsere Bewegung mit allen Kräften dahin wirken,

dass Deutschland innerhalb der deutschen Volksgrenzen wiederaufgebaut wird und alle separatistischen und partikularistischen Anschläge vereitelt werden;

dass alle deutschen Soldaten und Kriegsgefangenen ohne Zeitverlust ihren Familien zurückgegeben werden;

dass alle ausländischen Arbeiter und Gefangenen so rasch als möglich in ihre Heimatländer zurückgesandt werden.

4. Wir werden uns aber mit allen unseren Kräften dagegen wehren,

dass deutsches Gebiet gewaltsam vom Reiche losgerissen wird;

dass deutsche Arbeiter zu Arbeiten in anderen Ländern herangezogen werden;

dass die deutsche Wirtschaft durch Wiedergutmachungsleistungen überlastet wird;

dass das deutsche Volk als Ganzes für die Verbrechen und Greueltaten der nationalsozialistischen Machthaber und ihrer Trabanten verantwortlich gemacht werde.

5. Beseelt von dem unerschütterlichen Glauben an die Lebenskraft und die historische Sendung unseres Volkes, wollen wir den Wiederaufbau unserer Heimat beginnen. Unsere Leitsätze werden dabei die folgenden sein:

a) Der politische Wiederaufbau des deutschen Staates muss von unten auf erfolgen. In freien, geheimen, allgemeinen Wahlen wird das deutsche Volk seine Vertreter selbst bestimmen. Eine starke Reichsregierung wird der nationalen Volksvertretung verantwortlich sein. Jeder berechtigte Anspruch auf politische und kulturelle Autonomie wird durch eine zweckmässige Dezentralisierung der Verwaltung erfüllt werden.

Der Grundsatz, „gleiches Recht für Alle, ohne Unterschied ihrer Abstammung, Religion oder ihrer Berufszugehörigkeit," wird im neuen Deutschland voll verwirklicht werden.

Unter der Voraussetzung voller Gleichberechtigung wird das neue Deutschland sich an jeder übernationalen Rahmenorganisation beteiligen, die dahin wirkt, Frieden und Fortschritt in der Welt zu sichern.

b) Die Wiedererstarkung und gesunde Entwicklung der deutschen Wirtschaft erfordert die folgenden Massnahmen:

Befreiung von überflüssigen staatlichen Zwangsmassnahmen und Förderung des Güteraustausches mit anderen Völkern.

Unterstützung eines gesunden Mittelstandes, der Kleinindustrie und des Handwerkes Wahrung der Rechte der Festbesoldeten.

Wiederherstellung der freien Gewerkschaften als Partner freier Unternehmerverbände; Sicherung des Arbeitsfriedens durch Schiedsgerichte und frei vereinbarte Tarifverträge. Gesetzlicher Achtstundentag; Schutz und Ausbau der Sozialgesetzgebung.

Entschädigung für die Kriegsgeschädigten; Versorgung der durch den Krieg ihrer Ernährer beraubten Familien; Invalidenfürsorge und Berufshilfe für Soldaten.

Bauhilfe für Familien und Unternehmungen, deren Häuser und Anlagen durch den Krieg zerstört wurden.

Reform und Aufteilung des Grossgrundbesitzes und Unterstützung eines gesunden Bauernstandes.

c) Die Familie muss wieder zum Rückgrat des Volkes werden. Volle Lehr- und Lernfreiheit wird allen deutschen Kindern die gleichen Erziehungsmöglichkeiten gewährleisten. Den Kirchen und religiösen Verbänden wird volle Freiheit zugesichert; religiöse Schulen geniessen die gleichen Rechte wie weltliche.

Das deutsche Volksheer wird in Zukunft nur dem Schutze der deutschen Grenzen dienen. Militärische Jugenderziehung wird abgeschafft; uniformierte Parteitruppen und militaristische Verbände jeder Art werden im neuen Deutschland nicht geduldet.

Deutsches Volk!

Wir wollen und werden unsere geliebte Heimat wiederaufbauen: Haus für Haus, Dorf für Dorf, Stadt für Stadt. Es ist unser Ziel, dass das deutsche Volk in Frieden und in Ehren leben soll. Wir haben den festen Glauben, dass nicht Diktatur und Krieg, sondern sozialer und kultureller Fortschritt den Namen Deutschlands zu Ehren bringen werden.

Der Reichsausschuss
Das Neue Deutschland

DND-Gruppen für deutsche Kriegsgefangene

Eine unserer edelsten Aufgaben ist die Rettung unserer Ehre und des deutschen Kulturgutes nach dem Sturze des Verbrecherregimes. Die nationalsozialistischen Machthaber haben das Ansehen der deutschen Kultur in den Schmutz gezogen, sie haben das gemeine Verbrechen des Mordes und des Raubes als politische Tat getarnt und als solche stand es als erster Punkt auf ihrer Tagesordnung. Sie haben aber auch — und das ist viel schlimmer — ihre Verbrechen als eine Grosstat des ganzen deutschen Volkes hingestellt, um durch die Lüge der „Schicksalsgemeinschaft" das Volk zu zwingen bis zum letzten Atemzug für den Nationalsozialismus zu kämpfen, da es ja — so geben die Nazi vor — untrennbar mit dem Nationalsozialismus verwachsen sei und sozusagen als Spiessgeselle, als Mitschuldiger der Naziverbrechen die Konsequenzen daran mit zu tragen hätte.

Deshalb ist es für uns Deutsche lebenswichtig, den Kampf gegen das Regime offen und mit allen unseren Kräften aufzunehmen und durchzuführen, um hiedurch den Beweis zu erbringen, dass wir nicht untrennbar mit dem Verbrecherregime verwachsen sind, dass nicht das deutsche Volk, sondern einzig und allein die Clique unserer Tyrannen und Despoten für ihre Taten einzustehen haben. *Sie haben sich mit Blutschuld beladen, nicht wir!*

Wenn die Welt diese Tatsachen erkennt, wenn wir „Das Neue Deutschland", als Vertreter des unschuldigen Volkes den Beweis dafür erbracht haben, dann und nur dann können wir erwarten, dass Deutschland nicht für lange Jahre unter Fremdherrschaft leben müssen wird.

Unter Fremdherrschaft verstehen wir nicht nur die Besetzung Deutschlands durch Angehörige fremder Nationen. Eine solche Besetzung wäre ohnedies nur eine mehr oder weniger kurzfristige Massnahme. Die Gefahr besteht für uns darin, dass die deutschen Emigranten, jene, die das Reich vor mehr als zehn Jahren verlassen und sich im Ausland bereits soweit uns entfremdet haben, dass sie nur noch mit viel Phantasie als Deutsche angesehen werden können, dass diese Entfremdeten nun plötzlich in unserem Lande auftauchen und das deutsche Volk nach ihren Ideen und Begriffen regieren wollen.

Das Neue Deutschland erkennt deshalb als Mitglieder nur jene an, die bis zum letzten Augenblick mit uns gelebt und gelitten, die das Hitlerjoch gemeinsam mit dem ganzen deutschen Volk getragen und mit uns freiheitsliebenden Deutschen gegen ihre und unsere Unterdrückung gekämpft haben. Zu diesen gehören selbstverständlich auch die deutschen Kriegsgefangenen, nicht aber die sogenannten Auslandsdeutschen, die fremdländischer Beeinflussung zu lange Zeit ausgesetzt waren.

Es ist nunmehr Aufgabe der Kriegsgefangenen für „Das Neue Deutschland" auch in Kriegsgefangenenlagern zu werben. Eine starke DND-Gruppe in diesen Lagern kann für uns von allergrösster Bedeutung sein, um nach Friedensschluss eine raschere Rückführung unserer Kriegsgefangenen zu erzielen.

Auch dort gilt es den Beweis zu erbringen, dass das deutsche Volk mit dem Hitlerregime nicht identisch ist. Auch dort ist es ausschlaggebend, dass deutsche Bürger, deutsche Soldaten zeigen, dass wir Deutsche selber gegen den Nationalsozialismus kämpfen. Es gilt der Welt zu beweisen, dass „Das Neue Deutschland", existiert und als starker antifaschistischer Grundstock im deutschen Volk die beste Garantie dafür darstellt, dass sich das traurige Erlebnis des Staatsverbrechertums und des Krieges nicht wiederholen wird. Nur so und nur dadurch kann es uns gelingen für das Deutschland der Zukunft genügend Vertrauen zu gewinnen, damit die Welt uns wieder das Recht zur Selbstverwaltung gewährt. Dies ist möglich, wenn unsere Soldaten, die in Kriegsgefangenschaft geraten, in ihrem Lager eine DND-Zelle gründen und Werbeaktionen für „Das Neue Deutschland" ins Leben rufen. Dies ist möglich, wenn sie unsere Literatur in Kriegsgefangenenlager einschmuggeln und ihre Kameraden über den Bestand und den Kampf unserer Bewegung aufklären.

Um diese Einpflanzung unserer Ideen und der Bewegung in Kriegsgefangenenlagern zu erzielen, ist es zunächst notwendig, dass wir in der Heimat unsere Söhne und Väter, die an der Front stehen, zu dieser Aktion auffordern. Selbstverständlich beabsichtigen wir nicht die Soldaten zur Fahnenflucht zu ermutigen nur damit diese dann im Gefangenenlager als Aufklärer wirken können. Wir müssen es uns aber angelegen sein lassen, dass jeder deutsche Soldat, der das Unglück hat in Gefangenschaft zu geraten, dort wenigstens so weit als möglich, für seine und unsere Befreiung vom Hitlerjoch arbeitet und den Grundstein zu einer DND-Gruppe in seinem Lager legt.

Begreiflicherweise ist unsere Auflage durch den Mangel an Papier und Druckerschwärze ausserordentlich beschränkt, so dass wir nicht im Entferntesten in der Lage sind, die für alle unsere Mitglieder und Freunde notwendige Anzahl von Exemplaren zu drucken. Helft uns deshalb, indem ihr die Zeitung an eure Familie und eure Freunde weitersendet, nachdem ihr sie gelesen habt. Ihr werbt dadurch nicht nur neue Mitglieder und Anhänger für unsere Bewegung, sondern ihr helft damit auch dem Wiederaufbau unserer Heimat.

Vielen Dank!
Die Schriftleitung
„Das Neue Deutschland"

Das deutsche Volk will Frieden

Der Kampf des deutschen Volkes ist der Kampf gegen Hitler, der Kampf für den Frieden. Hier ein Bericht über nur einige der vielen Freiheitskundgebungen der letzten zwei Wochen:

Dresden: Seitdem Breslau offiziell „Festung Breslau" genannt wird, haben sich die Dresdner daran erinnert, dass möglicherweise auch bald von einer „Festung Dresden" gesprochen werden wird. Die wenig erfreuliche Aussicht als Kanonenfutter „Volkssturm" eingesetzt zu werden, während sich die Dresdner Parteibonzen, so wie die von Breslau, dessen zweiter Bürgermeister, Ministerialrat Dr. Spielhagen, wegen Feigheit vor dem Feind erschossen werden musste, „in wichtiger Angelegenheit" abrufen lassen werden, hat zu verschiedentlichen Kundgebungen Anlass gegeben. Der Dresdner Aktionsausschuss des „Neuen Deutschland" leitete einige dieser Volkskundgebungen der Empörung gegen die Nazimethoden. Die Parole war: Raus mit den Nazibonzen! Friede noch heute! Hunderte Männer und Frauen stimmten in das Kampflied „Das Neue Deutschland" ein. Den Nazibehörden wurde eindeutig klar gemacht, dass an eine „Festung Dresden" wohl nicht zu denken sei...

Donawitz (Steiermark): Hier kam es zu einer bedeutenden Friedenskundgebung in den Donawitzer Stahlwerken, im Verlaufe welcher wichtige Pläne und Akten, die als wesentlich zur Verlängerung des Krieges angesehen werden können, öffentlich verbrannt wurden. Zwei berüchtigte Gestapoleute wurden von österreichischen Patrioten hingerichtet.

Krefeld: Am 4. Februar, in den Morgenstunden kam es zu bedeutenden Demonstrationen der Arbeiter der Chemischen Fabriken, kurz nachdem eine Bekanntmachung angeschlagen wurde, die Richtlinien zum Verhalten der Belegschaft während der voraussichtlichen Zwangsevakuierung gab. Es hiess darin, dass die synthetische Kraftstofferzeugung bis zum letztmöglichen Augenblick in Betrieb zu halten sei und dass ein „vorzeitiges" Verlassen des Arbeitsplatzes mit standrechtlichem Erschiessen bestraft würde. In einer Massenkundgebung erklärten die Arbeiter, dass sie nicht bis zum letzten Mann auszuharren gewillt seien. „Wir wollen nicht", so hiess es wörtlich in ihrer Resolution, „die unnötige und verbrecherische Fortsetzung des Krieges mit unserem Leben bezahlen! Sollen doch die Herren Speer, Himmler und Ley mal herkommen und ausharren. Es ist ihr Krieg, nicht unser. Wir wollen Frieden!"

Weder Polizei noch Parteifunktionäre hatten den Mut, gegen die Demonstranten einzuschreiten. Beschwichtigungsversuche wurden gemacht, jedoch ohne Erfolg. Die Krefelder Arbeiter blieben dabei, dass sie ihre Arbeitsstätte verlassen werden, wenn sie es für notwendig erachten.

Chemnitz: Sowohl in Zwickau, wie auch in Chemnitz selbst, wurden Aktionen unserer Bewegung in grossem Masstabe durchgeführt. Man sah Klebezettel und Anschriften an allen öffentlichen Gebäuden und Streuzettelaktionen wurden in mehreren Hauptstrassen durchgeführt. Als eine Polizeistreife gegen eine Gruppe junger Frauen, die Flugblätter der Bewegung „Das Neue Deutschland" verteilten, einschreiten wollte, wurde sie von vorbeigehenden Zivilpersonen und Wehrmachtsangehörigen daran verhindert. Die „DND"-Kämpferinnen konnten dadurch in der Menge verschwinden. Dieses Beispiel ist ein Beweis dafür, dass die Massen mit uns sind. Sie bewiesen nicht nur ihre Sympathie für „Das Neue Deutschland", sondern sie nahmen auch aktiv an unserer Demonstration teil.

Klage einer „Rückgeführten"

„Ich wurde schon dreimal evakuiert; seit 1944 habe ich drei Heime verloren.

Unter den Trümmern unseres Hauses, das wir durch jahrelanges Sparen und Plagen endlich erbaut hatten, verlor ich meine beiden Eltern. Ich verlor alles, was ich hatte, was meine Jugend umgab und was ich liebte. Was die Bomben nicht vernichteten, haben die Flammen aufgefressen und als ich endlich nach Hause kam, glich unser Heim einer brennenden Fackel.

Und dann begann ich zu wandern. Von Breslau nach Berlin, aus einem ausgebombten Viertel in ein anderes und schliesslich, da es nirgends Sicherheit mehr gab, bin ich mit anderen Kriegsflüchtlingen in das viel besungene Sudetenland, abgeschoben worden.

Es war schwer in Breslau, noch schwerer in Berlin, aber erst hier habe ich wahres Elend kennengelernt. Um mich herum ist nichts als Hass, stumme Vorwürfe, und schliesslich offene Zeichen der Feindschaft. Wir haben die Reichsdeutschen nicht gewollt, wir haben den Nazikrieg nicht gewollt. Wir bluten für das Hitlerreich an allen Fronten, zu Hause werden wir mit unerträglichen Pflichten überlastet. Und warum, wofür?"

Das ist die Frage die mich verfolgt: warum und wofür... und ich lange an zu sehen, zu verstehen und zu urteilen. Ich sehe nicht nur meinen eigenen Fall, sondern die Millionen von zerstörten Häusern, vernichteten Leben und verschwendeten Kräften. Ich verstehe und urteile mit meinem eigenen Verstand.

Ich klage an:

für den Tod meiner Eltern, für die Zerstörung meiner Heimat, für den Betrug an meinem Volke."

Wie wird man Mitglied unserer Bewegung

Wir haben uns entschlossen unsere Bewegung noch einmal für Neuaufnahmen zu öffnen und als Bedingung für die vorläufige Aufnahme festgesetzt, dass der Antragsteller schon jetzt gegen die verbrecherischen „Nach-Niederlage"-Pläne der Partei arbeitet und als Beweis dafür möglichst vollständige Beschreibungen von hohen Parteifunktionären, Mitgliedern der SS, der Gestapo oder des SD, sowie von Angehörigen des Regimentes „Brandenburg", sammelt und aufhebt.

Mit dem Ausfüllen untenstehenden Formulars erlangt der Antragsteller gleichzeitig Bestätigung als vorläufiges Kampf- und Gründermitglied der Bewegung „DAS NEUE DEUTSCHLAND".

Noch ist es nicht an der Zeit alle Pläne zu besprechen, welche unsere Bewegung für den Tag der Befreiung vorbereitet hat, aber schon jetzt können wir gewisse Vorteile, die unsere Mitglieder geniessen werden, andeuten:

1.) Die von uns bereits gesammelten und laufend sich auftuenden Lebensmittel- und Kleidervorräte werden in erster Linie, auf Grund der von den Zentralausschüssen nach der Befreiung ausgegebenen Lebensmittel- und Kleiderscheinanweisungen, an Mitglieder verteilt werden;

2.) Diejenigen Mitglieder, deren Familienangehörige sich in Kriegsgefangenschaft befinden, können damit rechnen, dass diese als erste in die Heimat zurückkehren werden;

3.) Stellungen im öffentlichen Dienst werden in erster Linie Mitgliedern des „NEUEN DEUTSCHLAND" offen stehen;

4.) Ebenso werden bei der Ausgabe von Gewerbescheinen jeder Art unsere Mitglieder besondere Berücksichtigung erhalten.

DND — *Ausschneiden, ausfüllen und an einem sicheren Ort gut aufheben!* Dieser Mitgliedschaftsantrag muss *vor dem 1. April 1945* ausgefüllt werden, um Gültigkeit zu besitzen. — DND

DAS NEUE DEUTSCHLAND

(Diese eidesstattliche Erklärung dient als vorläufiger Antrag zur Aufnahme in „DAS NEUE DEUTSCHLAND" als ordentliches Kampf- und Gründermitglied.)

Ich _____
(Name und Vorname)

wohnhaft in _____
(genaue Anschrift)

geboren am _____ in _____
(Datum) (Geburtsort)

erkläre hiermit feierlich und an Eides statt, dass ich mit allen meinen Kräften an der Befreiung Deutschlands vom nationalsozialistischen Terror arbeite und bereit bin in diesem Befreiungskampf, wenn notwendig, mein Gut und Leben einzusetzen. Ich beschwöre ferner, dass ich in Folgeleistung der Geheimanweisung der Bewegung und in Vorsorge für die Zukunft des neuen freien Deutschlands von Morgen, laufend das Höchstmass der gestatteten Barabhebungen von meinen Bank- und Sparguthaben vorgenommen habe, und in meinem Besitze die Verbrecher gegen Deutschlands Bestand ihrer gerechten Bestrafung zuzuführen, fünf (oder mehr) Lebensbeschreibungen, mit genauer Anschrift und womöglich Lichtbild) von Angehörigen der SS, des SD oder der Gestapo, oder von höheren Parteifunktionären gesammelt und an einem sicheren Ort aufgehoben habe, um diese zur gegebenen Zeit den Bevollmächtigten des „Neuen Deutschland" auszuhändigen.

Auf Grund dieser Angaben, bitte ich hiermit um Aufnahme in die Bewegung „DAS NEUE DEUTSCHLAND" als Kampf- und Gründermitglied.

Kämpfer des „NEUEN DEUTSCHLAND"

Zeugen für die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben:

Kämpfer des „Neuen Deutschland" — Kämpfer des „Neuen Deutschland"

Den _____ 1945, in _____

(Nach der Befreiung von den zuständigen Ortsleitern auszufüllen):

Antrag stattgegeben Von Antragsteller und Mitgliedschaft anerkannt unter: No. _____

Sondernahrungsmittelzuweisung No. _____ von der Bewegung zugeteilt am: _____ 1945

Sonderkleidungszuweisung No. _____ von der Bewegung zugeteilt am: _____ 1945

Unterschrift des Ortsleiters: _____ : RM _____ (Datum) _____ (Datum)

Reverse Side

Appendix K

451ST Bombardment Group (H) WW II

49th Wing — **15th Air Force**

GROUP HEADQUARTERS 724th 725th 726th 727th Squadrons

Mission No.	Target	Country	Date
1	Fier Radar Station	Albania	30 Jan 44
2	Durazio Radar Station	Albania	2 Feb 44
3	Arrezo M/Y	Italy	3 Feb 44
4	Piombino M/Y & Steel Mills	Italy	8 Feb 44
5	Velletri Troop Support	Italy	10 Feb 44
6	Anzio Troop Support	Italy	12 Feb 44
7	Siena M/Y	Italy	16 Feb 44
8	Regensburg A/C Factory	Germany	22 Feb 44
9	Steyr A/C Factory	Austria	23 Feb 44
10	Regensburg A/C Factory	Germany	25 Feb 44
11	Pontessieve M/Y	Italy	7 Mar 44
12	Toulon Sub/Pens	France	11 Mar 44
13	Cassino Troop Support	Italy	15 Mar 44
14	Vienna	Austria	17 Mar 44
15	Lavariano	Italy	18 Mar 44
16	Klagenfurt	Austria	19 Mar 44
17	Steyr Ball Bearing Factory	Austria	24 Mar 44
18	Mestre M/Y	Italy	28 Mar 44
19	Bolzano M/Y	Italy	29 Mar 44
20	Sofia M/Y	Bulgaria	30 Mar 44
21	Steyr	Austria	2 Apr 44
22	Budapest M/Y	Hungary	3 Apr 44
23	Bucharest M/Y	Rumania	4 Apr 44
24	Ploesti Oil Refineries	Rumania	5 Apr 44
25	Zagreb M/Y	Yugoslavia	12 Apr 44
26	Budapest Airdrome	Hungary	13 Apr 44
27	Bucharest M/Y	Rumania	15 Apr 44
28	Brasov Airdrome	Rumania	16 Apr 44
29	Belgrade Zemun Airdrome	Yugoslavia	17 Apr 44
30	Ferrara M/Y	Italy	20 Apr 44
31	Bucharest	Rumania	21 Apr 44
32	Bad Voslau Airdrome	Austria	23 Apr 44
33	Bucharest M/Y	Rumania	24 Apr 44
34	Orbetello Seaplane Base	Italy	28 Apr 44
35	Toulon Sub Pens	France	29 Apr 44
36	Alessandria M/Y	Italy	30 Apr 44
37	Orbetello Seaplane Base	Italy	2 May 44
38	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	5 May 44
39	Pitesti M/Y	Rumania	6 May 44
40	Bucharest M/Y	Rumania	7 May 44
41	Weiner Neustadt Airdrome	Austria	10 May 44
42	Piombino Troop Support	Italy	12 May 44
43	Faenza M/Y	Italy	13 May 44
44	Padua M/Y	Italy	14 May 44
45	Porto Ferrajo Harbor Area	Italy	17 May 44
46	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	18 May 44
47	Recco Viaduct	Italy	19 May 44
48	Marina De Carrara	Italy	22 May 44
49	Subiaco Troop Support	Italy	23 May 44
50	Wollersdorf Airdrome	Austria	24 May 44
51	Carnoules M/Y	France	25 May 44
52	Lyons	France	26 May 44
53	Salon De Provence Airdrome	France	27 May 44
54	Weiner Neustadt A/C Factory	Austria	29 May 44
55	Wels A/C Factory	Austria	30 May 44
56	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	31 May 44
57	Szolnok M/Y	Hungary	2 Jun 44
58	Gad Railroad Bridge	Italy	4 Jun 44
59	Rimini Bridge	Italy	5 Jun 44
60	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	6 Jun 44
61	Antheor Viaduct	France	7 Jun 44
62	Porto Marghero O/R	Italy	9 Jun 44
63	Porto Marghero O/R	Italy	10 Jun 44
64	Giurgiu Oil Storages	Rumania	11 Jun 44
65	Neuaubing, Munich Area A/D	Germany	13 Jun 44
66	Szony O/R	Hungary	14 Jun 44
67	Rimini M/Y & Bridge	Italy	22 Jun 44
68	Giurgiu	Rumania	23 Jun 44
69	Le Pontet Telephone Bldg.	France	25 Jun 44
70	Vienna O/R	Austria	26 Jun 44
71	Chitila M/Y	Rumania	28 Jun 44
72	Blechhammer -Early Return-	Germany	30 Jun 44
73	Budapest Locomotive Depot	Hungary	2 Jul 44
74	Bucharest Oil Storage	Rumania	3 Jul 44
75	Beziers M/Y	France	5 Jul 44
76	Aviano Oil Storage	Italy	6 Jul 44
77	Blechhammer O/R	Germany	7 Jul 44
78	Vienna O/R	Austria	8 Jul 44
79	Toulon Sub/Pens	France	11 Jul 44
80	Nimes M/Y	France	12 Jul 44
81	Petfurdo O/R	Hungary	14 Jul 44
82	Creditul O/R	Rumania	15 Jul 44
83	Wiener Neusdorf A/C Factory	Austria	16 Jul 44
84	Arles Railroad Bridge	France	17 Jul 44
85	Manzell A/C Factory	Germany	18 Jul 44
86	Scheissheim Airdrome	Germany	19 Jul 44
87	Brux O/R	Czechoslovakia	21 Jul 44
88	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	22 Jul 44
89	Linz H. Goering Tank Fcty	Austria	25 Jul 44
90	Beret O/R	Albania	26 Jul 44
91	Budapest Arms Factory	Hungary	27 Jul 44
92	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	28 Jul 44
93	Budapest A/C Factory	Hungary	30 Jul 44
94	Bucharest O/R	Rumania	31 Jul 44
95	Le Pontet Oil Storage	France	2 Aug 44
96	Vipiteno (Friedrichshafen Area)	Germany	3 Aug 44
97	Miramas M/Y	France	6 Aug 44
98	Blechhammer O/R	Germany	7 Aug 44
99	Almasfuzito O/R	Hungary	9 Aug 44
100	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	10 Aug 44
101	Genoa Gun Positions	Italy	12 Aug 44
102	Genoa Gun Positions	Italy	13 Aug 44
103	Toulon Gun Positions	France	14 Aug 44
104	Frejus Beach Area	France	15 Aug 44
105	Ploesti O/R	Rumania	17 Aug 44
106	Alibunar Airdrome	Yugoslavia	18 Aug 44
107	Szolnock/Rakoczifala Airdrome	Hungary	20 Aug 44
108	Vienna Oil Storage	Austria	22 Aug 44
109	Markersdorf Airdrome	Austria	23 Aug 44
110	Ferrara Railroad Bridge	Italy	24 Aug 44
111	Otopeni Airdrome	Rumania	26 Aug 44
112	Venzone Viaduct	Italy	27 Aug 44
113	Szolnock/szajol Railroad Bridge	Hungary	28 Aug 44
114	Szeged M/Y	Hungary	29 Aug 44
115	Ferrara Railroad Bridge	Italy	1 Sep 44
116	Mitrovica Railroad Bridge	Yugoslavia	2 Sep 44

Mission No.		Target	Country	Date
117		Sava East R.R. Bridge (Belgrade)	Yugoslavia	5 Sep 44
118		Sava East R.R. Bridge (Belgrade)	Yugoslavia	6 Sep 44
119		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	10 Sep 44
120		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	11 Sep 44
121		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	12 Sep 44
122		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	13 Sep 44
123		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	15 Sep 44
124		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	16 Sep 44
125		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	17 Sep 44
126		Bron Airdrome (Supply) Lyons	France	22 Sep 44
127		Athens/Eleusis Airdrome	Greece	24 Sep 44
128		Athens Area Sub/Pens	Greece	25 Sep 44
129	(Able)	Munich West M/Y	Germany	4 Oct 44
	(Baker)	Latisana Railroad Bridge	Italy	4 Oct 44
130	(Red)	Vienna Oil Refinery	Austria	7 Oct 44
	(Blue)	Komarno M/Y	Hungary	7 Oct 44
131		Castelfranco M/Y	Italy	10 Oct 44
132		Graz Area	Austria	11 Oct 44
133		Bologna (Target #97)	Italy	12 Oct 44
134		Ostereichische Motor Wks & M/Y	Austria	13 Oct 44
135		Odertal O/R	Germany	14 Oct 44
136		Linz H. Goering Benzol Plant	Austria	16 Oct 44
137		Vienna/Vosendorf O/R	Austria	17 Oct 44
138		Milan Breda Works	Italy	20 Oct 44
139	(Red)	Munich Allach A/C Factory	Germany	23 Oct 44
	(Blue)	Milan Breda Works	Italy	23 Oct 44
140		Regensburg Oil Refinery	Germany	29 Oct 44
141		Podgorica Troop Concentrations	Yugoslavia	31 Oct 44
142		Vienna Ordnance Depot	Austria	1 Nov 44
143		Klagenfurt A/C Factory	Germany	3 Nov 44
144		Kufstein M/Y	Germany	4 Nov 44
145	(Baker)	Vienna Oil Refinery	Austria	5 Nov 44
	(Charlie)	Sarajevo M/Y	Yugoslavia	5 Nov 44
146	(Able)	Vienna Ordnance Depot	Austria	6 Nov 44
	(Baker)	Salorno Transformer Station	Italy	6 Nov 44
147		Sarajevo (Ali Pasin Most) M/Y	Yugoslavia	7 Nov 44
148		Aviano Airdrome	Italy	11 Nov 44
149		Innsbruck Main M/Y	Germany	15 Nov 44
150		Munich West M/Y	Germany	16 Nov 44
151	(A-Blue)	Vienna Oil Refinery	Austria	17 Nov 44
	(B-Red)	Blechhammer South O/R	Germany	17 Nov 44
152		Villa Franco Airdrome	Italy	18 Nov 44
153		Maribor M/Y	Yugoslavia	19 Nov 44
154		Blechhammer South O/R	Germany	20 Nov 44
155		Novi Pazar Troop Concentration	Yugoslavia	21 Nov 44
156		Munich M/Y	Germany	22 Nov 44
157		Innsbruck Main M/Y	Germany	25 Nov 44
158		Blechhammer South O/R	Germany	2 Dec 44
159		Innsbruck M/Y	Austria	3 Dec 44
160		Maribor M/Y	Yugoslavia	6 Dec 44
161		Innsbruck M/Y	Austria	7 Dec 44
162		Graz M/Y	Austria	8 Dec 44
163		Villach M/Y	Austria	9 Dec 44
164		Brux Oil Refinery	Czechoslovakia	10 Dec 44
165		Vienna	Austria	11 Dec 44
166		Linz M/Y	Austria	15 Dec 44
167		Brux O/R	Czechoslovakia	16 Dec 44
168		Odertal O/R	Germany	17 Dec 44
169		Blechhammer O/R	Germany	18 Dec 44
170		Blechhammer O/R	Germany	19 Dec 44
171		Linz M/Y	Austria	20 Dec 44
172		Wels M/Y	Austria	25 Dec 44
173		Oswiecim Oil Refinery	Poland	26 Dec 44
174		Venzone Railroad Viaduct	Italy	27 Dec 44
175		Venzone Railroad Viaduct	Italy	28 Dec 44
176		Udine Factory	Italy	29 Dec 44
177		Trento Rail Installations	Italy	4 Jan 45
178		Zagreb Rail Installations	Yugoslavia	5 Jan 45
179		Linz M/Y	Austria	8 Jan 45
180		Vienna Locomotive Factory	Austria	15 Jan 45
181		Brod R.R. Bridge	Yugoslavia	19 Jan 45
182		Linz M/Y	Austria	20 Jan 45
183	(Red)	Graz M/Y	Austria	31 Jan 45
	(Blue)	Moosebierbaum O/R	Austria	31 Jan 45
184		Moosebierbaum O/R	Austria	1 Feb 45
185		Regensburg Oil Storage	Germany	5 Feb 45

Mission No.		Target	Country	Date
186	(Red)	Korneuburg Oil Refinery	Austria	7 Feb 45
	(Blue)	Bratislava Port Area	Czechoslovakia	7 Feb 45
187		Vienna Repair Shops	Austria	8 Feb 45
188		Graz M/Y	Austria	9 Feb 45
189	(Able)	Maribor M/Y	Yugoslavia	13 Feb 45
	(Baker)	Maribor M/Y	Yugoslavia	13 Feb 45
190	(Red)	Moosbierbaum O/R	Austria	14 Feb 45
	(Blue)	Moosbierbaum O/R	Austria	14 Feb 45
191	(Red)	Vosendorf O/R	Austria	15 Feb 45
	(Blue)	Vienna M/Y	Austria	15 Feb 45
192		Neuburg Airdrome	Germany	16 Feb 45
193		Wels Repair Depot	Austria	17 Feb 45
194		St. Valentin Tank Works	Austria	18 Feb 45
195		Graz M/Y	Austria	19 Feb 45
196		Pola Naval Base	Italy	20 Feb 45
197		Vienna Station Area	Austria	21 Feb 45
198		Rosenheim & Targets of Opport.	Germany	22 Feb 45
199		Knittelfeld M/Y	Austria	23 Feb 45
200		Klagenfurt M/Y	Austria	24 Feb 45
201		Linz M/Y	Austria	25 Feb 45
202		Caprag O/R	Yugoslavia	26 Feb 45
203		Augsburg M/Y	Germany	27 Feb 45
204	(Red)	Bolzano M/Y	Italy	28 Feb 45
	(Blue)	Bolzano M/Y	Italy	28 Feb 45
205	(Red)	Moosbierbaum O/R	Austria	1 Mar 45
	(Blue)	Moosbierbaum O/R	Austria	1 Mar 45
206		Linz Benzol Plant	Austria	2 Mar 45
207		Graz M/Y	Austria	4 Mar 45
208	(Red)	Hegyeshalom M/Y	Hungary	8 Mar 45
	(Blue	Hegyeshalom M/Y	Hungary	8 Mar 45
209	(Red)	Bruck M/Y	Austria	9 Mar 45
	(Blue	Graz M/Y	Austria	9 Mar 45
210		Vienna O/R	Austria	12 Mar 45
211		Regensburg M/Y	Germany	13 Mar 45
212		Weiner Neustadt M/Y	Austria	14 Mar 45
213		Klagenfurt M/Y	Austria	15 Mar 45
214		Moosbierbaum O/R	Austria	16 Mar 45
215		Muhldorf M/Y	Germany	19 Mar 45
216		Wels M/Y	Austria	20 Mar 45
217		Bruck M/Y	Austria	21 Mar 45
218		Vienna Kagran O/R (+ Graz)	Austria	22 Mar 45
219		Vienna Kagran O/R	Austria	23 Mar 45
220		Buedjovice M/Y	Czechoslovakia	24 Mar 45
221		Prague Kbely Airdrome	Czechoslovakia	25 Mar 45
222		Straszhof M/Y	Austria	26 Mar 45
223		Klagenfurt M/Y	Austria	30 Mar 45
224		Linz Benzol Plant	Austria	31 Mar 45
225		Klagenfurt M/Y	Austria	1 Apr 45
226		St. Polten M/Y	Austria	2 Apr 45
227		Brescia M/Y	Italy	5 Apr 45
228		Brescia Arms Plant	Italy	6 Apr 45
229		Bressanone R.R. Bridge	Italy	7 Apr 45
230		Gorizia M/Y	Italy	8 Apr 45
231	(Red)	Area Apple Ground Support	Italy	9 Apr 45
	(Blue)	Area Apple Ground Support	Italy	9 Apr 45
232	(Red)	Area Baker Ground Support	Italy	10 Apr 45
	(Blue)	Area Baker Ground Support	Italy	10 Apr 45
233		Bronzola M/Y	Italy	11 Apr 45
234		St. Veit R.R. Bridge	Austria	12 Apr 45
235		Malcontenta Ammo Factory	Italy	14 Apr 45
236	(Red)	Bologna (Area M-22)	Italy	15 Apr 45
	(Blue)	Nervesa R.R. Bridge	Italy	15 Apr 45
237		Bologna (Area ST-18)	Italy	16 Apr 45
238		Bologna (Area ST-18)	Italy	17 Apr 45
239		Avisio R.R. Bridge	Italy	19 Apr 45
240		Lusia Road Bridge	Italy	20 Apr 45
241		Attnang-Puchiem M/Y	Austria	21 Apr 45
242		Badia Road Bridge	Italy	23 Apr 45
243		Rovereto M/Y	Italy	24 Apr 45
244		Linz M/Y	Austria	25 Apr 45
245		Sachsenburg M/Y	Austria	26 Apr 45

M/Y--Designates Marshalling Yards
O/R--Designates Oil Refinery
A/C--Designates Aircraft

Appendix L

United States Army

Air Forces Technical School

Be it known that

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KARL F. EICHHORN, JR., 35602859

has satisfactorily completed the prescribed

AIRCRAFT ARMORERS
(BOMBARDMENT)

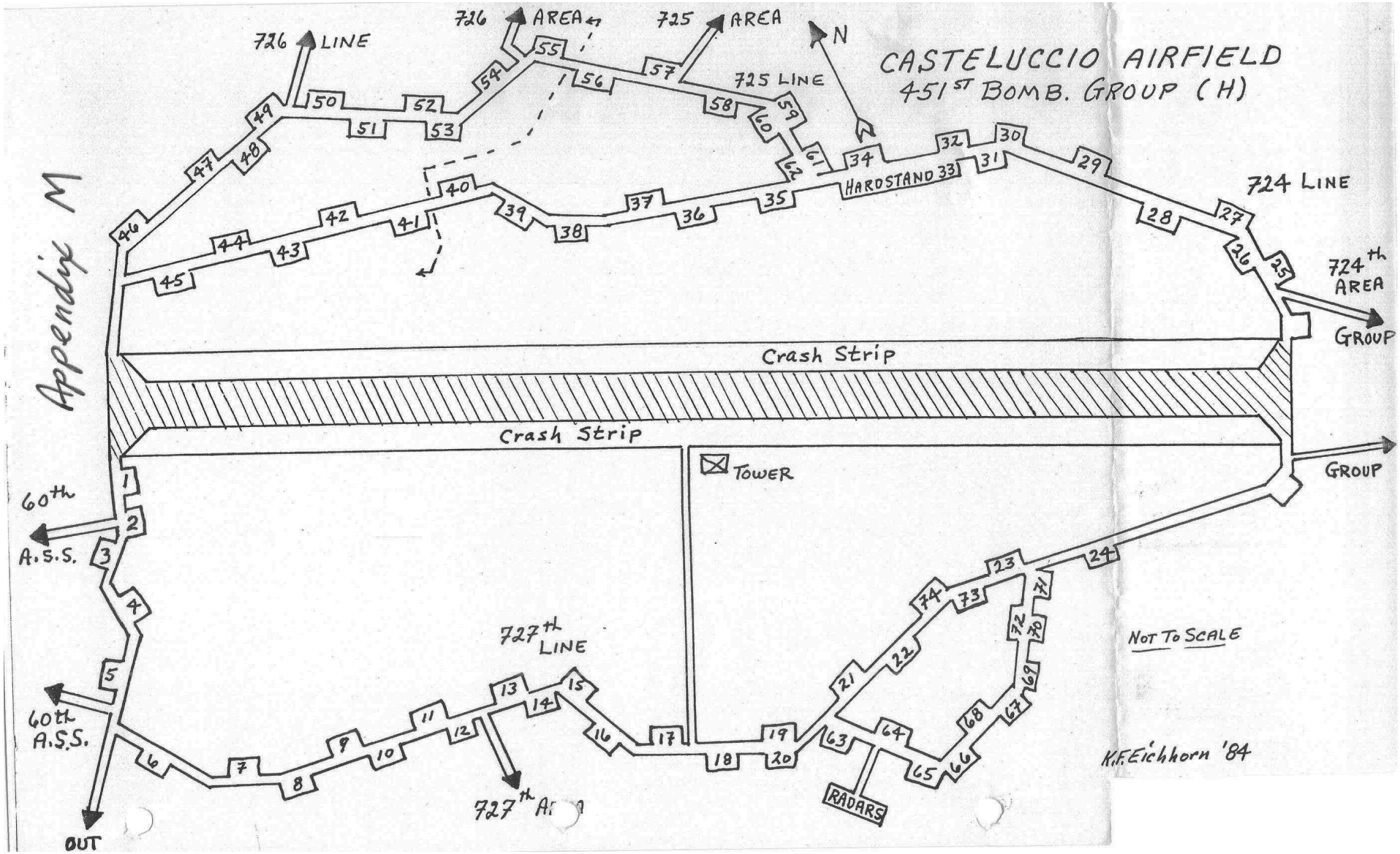
course of instruction at the Air Forces Technical School.
In testimony whereof and by virtue of vested authority
I do confer upon him this

——DIPLOMA——

Given on this 10th *day of* July
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty-three.

John Kane

JOHN KANE,
Captain, Air Corps,
Acting DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF ARMAMENT


Appendix M
CASTELUCCIO AIRFIELD
451ST BOMB. GROUP (H)
726 LINE
726 AREA
725 AREA
725 LINE
N
724 LINE
724th AREA
GROUP
Crash Strip
Crash Strip
TOWER
HARDSTAND 33
60th A.S.S.
60th A.S.S.
727th LINE
727th AREA
RADARS
OUT
NOT TO SCALE
K.F. Eichhorn '84

Appendix N

LOG OF B-24 AIRCRAFT OF 726TH BOMB SQUADRON (H)

TAIL NUMBER	NAME	HISTORY
151	OLD TUB	Crashed on takeoff at Gioia, 8 Feb. '44
738	HARD TO GET	Lost over Regensburg, Germany, 25 Feb. '44
751	ICE COLD KATIE	Damaged on takeoff crash at San Pancrazio 21 March. Repaired and returned to squadron 20 August. Declared Class 26 after Blechhammer raid of 17 December '44.
087	READY TEDDY	Missing after Wiener Neusdorf raid, 16 July '44.
153	ROMAN'S CANDLES	- Renamed THUNDERMUG II . Lost over Budapest 27 July, '44.
156		Transferred out of squadron early 1944
475	THUNDER MUG	Transferred out of squadron early 1944
114	LONESOME POLECAT	Ditched in Adriatic Sea after Porto Marghero raid 10 June '44.
460	RED RYDER	Damaged by flak over France 2 August. Landed at Pascera. Transferred to 725th in October '44.
102	CANNON FODDER	Crashed on takeoff, 15 August '44
541	PEACE TERMS	- Renamed ICE COLD KATIE II. Missing over Ploesti 28 July '44
~~687~~ 697	CAVE GAL	- Renamed THE STORK. Sent to depot, declared unfit for combat, spring '44
078	BIG MOGUL	Sent to depot & declared unfit for combat late spring '44.
229	OZARK UPSTART	- Renamed OLD TUB II. Sent to depot - judged unfit for combat.
242	FLABBERGASTED FANNY	Sent to depot 12 Sept. '44. Judged unfit for combat.
636	THREE FEATHERS	Sent to depot 12 Sept. '44. Judged unfit for combat.
111	OLD TAYLOR	Blew up over Vienna, 22 August '44.
580 ✓	SCREAMIN' MEEMIE II	Badly damaged by flak over Vienna 22 August '44 Crew bailed out over Austria.
082	SCREAMIN' MEEMIE	- Renamed THE A TRAIN. Designated Class 26 because of flak damage during Vienna raid, 22 August '44.
208		Replaced 687. Went down over Jugoslavia after raid 14 July '44.
429	BIG FAT MAMMA	- Renamed SMALL FRY. Crew bailed out over Austria because of engine damage during Markersdorf mission 23 August '44.
250	GOOSEY LUCY	Crashed on takeoff , 22 July '44.
760		Radar plane. Badly damaged over Vienna, 22 August '44. Landed at Foggia. Repaired and returned to squadron 15 October '44.
478	THE POLITICIANS	- Replaced 087 - Lost 18 July '44 while attempting emergency landing near front lines in Italy.
465	PATCHES	- THE TIN TAPPER'S DELIGHT. Replaced 208.
300	WET DREAM	Replaced 078 - Blew up over Vienna 22 August '44.
321	THE BAD PENNY	- Replaced 478 - Lost over Vienna 1 November '44.
484	MERRY BARBARA	- Replaced 250 - Ditched in Adriatic on 6th mission, 17 Aug. '44.
955	Klunker	Missing after mission into Austria 13 October, but returned to Squadron 5 November. Missing after Blechhammer mission 17 Nov. 44.
334		- Replaced 102 - Lost over Markersdorf, 23 August '44.
952		Replaced 153. Made emergency landing in Jugoslavia after Blechhammer mission 14 October. Returned to Squadron 15 Oct. Made emergency landing on island in Adriatic after Blechhammer mission on 20 November. Returned to squadron 2 December '44. Sustained major flak damage over Kagran oil refinery 22 March '45 and was transferred to depot.
613	Replaced 111	Landed at Foggia badly shot up after Vienna, 11 December. Returned to squadron 23 March '45.
198	Replaced 580	Crashed on takeoff 16 October '44, Class 26.
587	Replaced 484	Lost over Vienna 13 October '44.
679	Replaced 300	Nosed in and blew up on takeoff 3 September '44.
626	Replaced 334	Missing after Blechhammer 18 Dec. Landed at Foggia and returned to squadron 19 January '45.
585	Replaced 429	Lost over Vienna 11 December '44.
662	Arrived 21 Sept.	to replace 679. Crash-landed at Foggia after Blechhammer 20 November. Returned to Squadron mid-January '45.

Appendix N Cont.

630	Arrived 22 Sept. to replace 242. Badly damaged during landing after Blechhammer raid 20 November. Class 26.
483	Arrived 21 Sept. to replace 636. Missing after Maribor, Jugoslavia raid 19 Nov.
680	Arrived 6 Sept. to replace 082. Later transferred to 727th.
860	Arrived 10 Oct. Radar plane transferred from 484th.
947	Arrived 11 Oct. to replace 680. Lost over Blechhammer 14 Oct. First mission!
677	Arrived 15 Oct. to replace 587. Missing after Vienna raid, 11 December but returned to squadron 16 December.
045	Arrived 15 Oct. to replace 947. Crash landed on island off Jugoslavia after Sarajevo raid 7 Nov. '44. Returned to squadron 2 December. Collided with 941 over Blechhammer 17 December.
941	Arrived 18 Oct. to replace 460. Collided with 045 over Blechhammer 17 December.
623	Arrived in Sept. to replace 760. Lost over Munich when bomb fell through wing on 16 November.
055	Arrived 2 Nov. Radar plane. Crashed into mountain in northern Italy on 15 January '45. Nine killed.
606	Arrived 24 Nov. to replace 630. Transferred from 461st. Missing after mission on 26 December.
497	Arrived 24 Nov. to replace 483. Transferred from 461st.
953	Arrived 15 Dec. to replace 585. Missing after Vienna raid 23 March''45, but returned to squadron later.
414	Arrived 19 Dec. to replace 941. Lost over Blechhammer 26 December.
623	Arrived 20 Dec. to replace 045. Landed in Jugoslavia 21 March '45 but returned OK later.
539	Arrived 20 Dec. to replace 751 Sustained major flak damage over Bolzano, Italy on 28 Feb. '45. Crew bailed out. Plane lost.
659	Arrived 5 Jan. to replace 606. Crashed and burned during attempted emergency landing in northern Italy after Moosbierbaum, 1 March '45.
456	Arrived 12 Jan. '45 to replace 414. (SAD SACK)
603	Arrived 19 Jan. '45 to replace 055.
876	Arrived 31 Jan. '45 to replace 613
872	Arrived 4 Feb. '45 Radar plane
143	Arrived 9 Feb. '45 Radar plane
586	Arrived 14 March to replace 659. Radar plane
885(M)	Arrived 5 April to replace 952.
241	THE ROYAL PROD Unarmed squadron transport.

The above log lists all of the B-24 aircraft assigned to the 726th Squadron (451st Heavy Bombardment Group of the 15th Air Force) in Italy during the period December 1943 to May 1945. The data were taken from the daily journal of Cpl. Karl F. Eichhorn, Jr. (A.S.N. 35602859), assigned to the Squadron as an Aircraft Armorer.

COLOR CODING USED ON REVETMENT NUMBERS

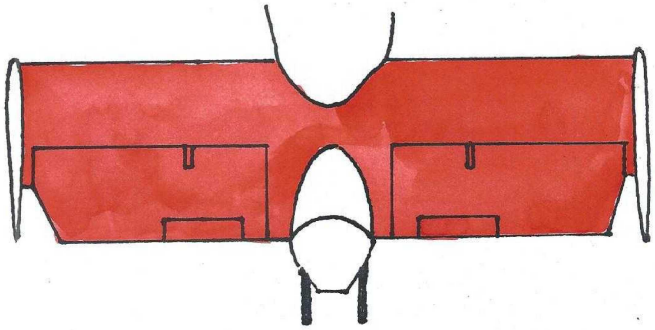
(ALSO PAINTED ON AIRCRAFT)

	Numerals	Background
724 th Squadron	Black	White
725 th Squadron	White	Red
726 th Squadron	White	Green
727 th Squadron	Red	Yellow

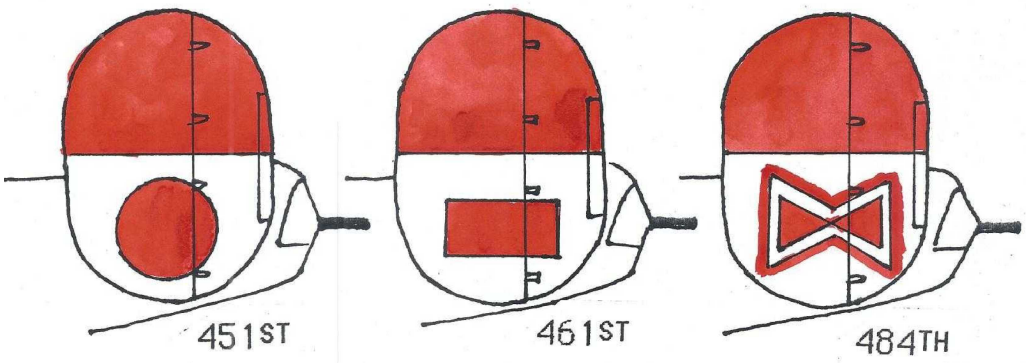
Appendix O

COLOR CODING
49TH WING & 451ST GROUP

UPPER HORIZONTAL TAIL SURFACE
RED - ALL GROUPS



GROUP FIN & RUDDER COLORS



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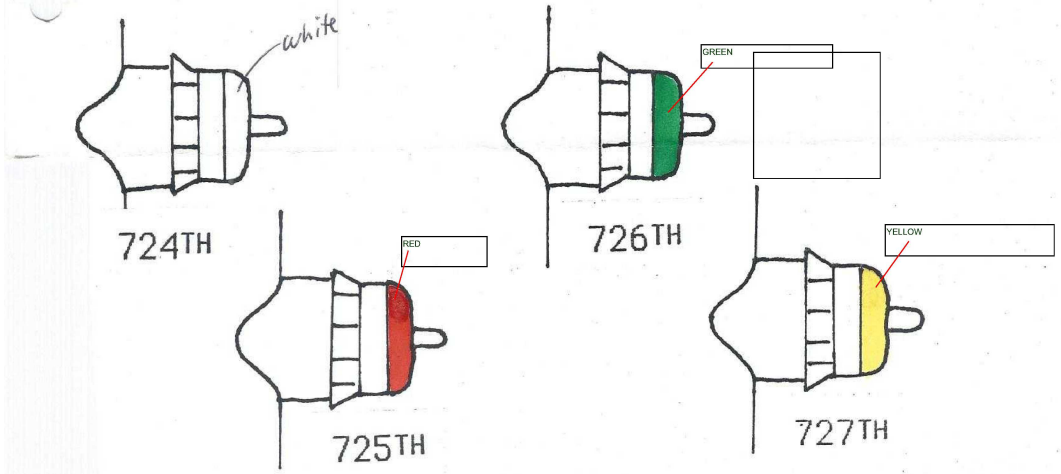


Betty and Karl Eichhorn Biography

Compiled by Hugh Nicolay
November, 2017

Betty was born on September 1, 1932, in Southampton, Long Island, New York. She was the first of four children born to Nelle E. (Rayburn) and Joseph T. Beresheim, Sr.. Her mother was a school teacher, and her father was a merchant marine. When Betty was six, the family moved to Coral Gables, Florida. She completed her secondary schooling at Saint Theresa Catholic School in 1950. Her classmates voted her the most intelligent female in the graduating class. Betty received her BS in mathematics from the University of Florida in 1956. As a student, she worked part-time at the Library of Florida History and read most of the archives.

After college, Betty accepted a position with North American Aviation, General Motors, and TRW at Cape Canaveral. She performed telemetry and engineering test data analysis tasks. She rented a room in Cocoa. While working for GM, she took notice of Karl Eichhorn and told a friend, "I am going to marry that guy." They dated on Thursday nights or went to Orlando to avoid the obvious office romance. Betty told Karl that if he was serious, they should get married. They were married on October 23, 1965, at the Church of Our Savior in Cocoa Beach. She moved into Karl's bachelor pad in Cocoa Beach, which became their home for 53 years. Karl soon gave up his weekly poker nights and, sometime later, sold his Corvette. From then on, they were a couple in everything they did and they did a lot together.

Karl Frederick Eichhorn, Jr. was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 4, 1924. He was the first of two children born to Marguerite (Bissell) and Karl F. Eichhorn, Sr.. The family moved to Barnesville, Ohio. Karl's father was a chicken farmer. Karl had an early interest in photography. His first camera, an Argus C3, was a gift from his parents at his eighth-grade graduation for achieving first place in Ohio in the state-wide placement examination for 4500 eighth-grade students. He worked part-time in a photography studio during his teen years and began his commitment to journaling. Karl graduated from high school in 1943 and immediately enlisted in the US Army Air Corps. After basic training in St. Petersburg, Florida, he was assigned to the 726 Bomb Squad of the 451st Bomb Group, first in Northern Africa and then Italy. He was an armorer, tasked with loading bombs and ammunition in bombers headed to Germany. In his free time, he set up a makeshift dark room, processed his film, and took on developing and printing pictures for fellow airmen.

When the war ended, Karl returned home and enrolled in Ohio State University, where he received his Master's degree in Physics. He wanted to get his doctorate, but his VA benefits ran out. His first employment was with General Electric in Schenectady, New York, where he was a 'rocket scientist'. Karl began his interest in hiking and camping in the nearby Adirondack Mountains. Karl left GE and accepted a position with TRW as a systems engineer and engineering supervisor at Cape Canaveral, where Betty spotted him.

Betty asked Karl to go with her on an Audubon field trip. Betty's father was an Audubon member. It wasn't long after they married that Karl became president of the little "Cocoa Bird Club" as it was informally known. Karl and Betty were co-presidents of the Audubon chapter and led many subsequent environmental endeavors. They transformed the bird club into a full-fledged chapter of the Florida and National Audubon Societies. Membership increased fourfold. They expanded the group's scope beyond birds to include all aspects of natural history. They invited well-known speakers from all over the state to the monthly meetings. New camping, canoeing, and hiking activities attracted younger families. Karl and Betty began publishing a monthly newsletter. Conservation and youth education were added to the chapter agenda. It was also a time of tremendous change in environmental laws and enlightenment at all levels of society – Earth Day, Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring', Marjory Douglas' 'River of Grass', The Clean Air Act, The Clean Water Act, The Wilderness Act, The National Environmental Protection Act. Karl, Betty, and many others witnessed the end of dredging and filling of mangrove wetlands, the termination of the channelization of the St. Johns River, the demise of the Cross Florida Barge Canal, and the suspension of the construction of the Everglades Jetport. They also saw the creation of new parks and preserves, including Lori Wilson Park, Ulamay Preserve, Turkey Creek Sanctuary, Thousand Islands of Cocoa Beach, Tosohatchee Preserve, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Betty and Karl remained active in Audubon after their four-year term from 1967 to 1971. Soon, Karl became president of the fledgling Florida Trail Association and continued in that capacity for two years. He attended far-flung board meetings and gatherings. He cut and marked miles of trails. The Association, under his leadership, drew trail maps and compiled guides. Somehow, Betty and Karl wedged all their volunteer hours into their Cape work schedule.

In the early 1970s, Betty and Karl's Cape employer wanted to transfer them to California. They declined, preferring to stay in their Florida homeland. They opened a store specializing in camping and outdoor equipment called The Wilderness Shop. Neither Betty nor Karl had small business experience, but to no one's surprise, they made a success of the venture, which they continued for 15 years until retirement.

Retirement gave Betty and Karl more time to fill their lives with interests and projects. Betty took on leadership roles in the Cocoa Beach Garden Club, where she edited their monthly newsletter and served as president. As a member of the Central Brevard Genealogy Society, she taught the introductory class in genealogy, dug deep into the science of DNA testing, and served as president. She also researched her family history. She maintained the official bird list for the Cocoa Christmas Bird Count and the Space Coast Bird and Wildlife Festival. Karl had typed up his daily journal from WWII, and years later, Betty edited it into a book. Karl expanded his interest in World War II and the Civil War. He participated in and chaired the local Civil War Roundtable group. Karl volunteered at the Merritt Island NWR Visitor's Center.

Karl expanded his antique camera, antique outboard motor, and limited-edition bird and wildlife prints collections. Betty had a silver coin collection, a children's dish collection, and various glass and porcelain items. They took their collections to antique shows, where they bought and sold. Betty and Karl devoured a dozen magazines monthly and accumulated books on every subject of interest. They watched very little TV, maybe PBS news, and never had cable.

They continued to camp and travel. When the old VW bus finally gave out after many engine swaps, all done by Karl, of course, they bought a Chevy van, which Karl converted to an RV camper of sorts. They went west several times, north to Hudson Bay, and northeast to Newfoundland. They bought a small used self-contained camping van to use as their camping days came to a close.

Betty and Karl were a Renaissance couple. They had little interest in the trappings or activities that use up time that could be better spent diving deep into a subject until they knew and experienced just about all that was readily available. Instead of going out to dinner and a movie, you might find them knee deep in a remote bog with a tape recorder and flashlight in hand, trying to identify and record frog singing after a spring rain, just for their intellectual curiosity and satisfaction. They are a couple to admire, for who they were, how they lived, and what they unselfishly gave.

Elizabeth Ann "Betty" (Beresheim) Eichhorn died September 23, 2017, at age 85, at a hospice facility in Viera with family, friends, and her husband of 53 years, Karl F. Eichhorn, Jr., at her side.

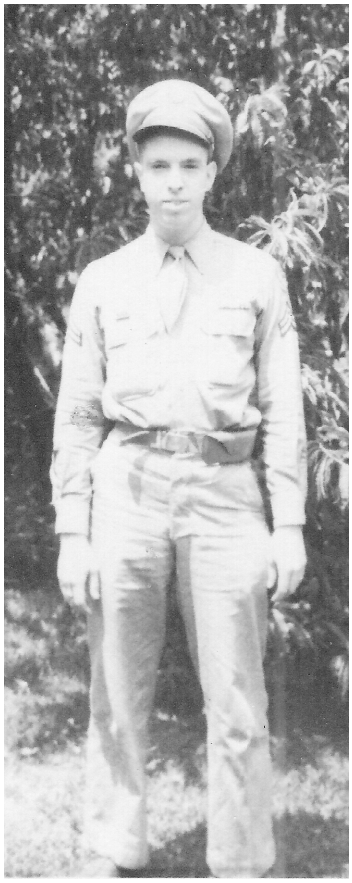
Betty is survived by brother Joseph T. Beresheim, Jr. (Patricia) of Apopka, Florida, brother James W. Beresheim of Orlando, Florida, sister Margaret Blessitt of Orlando, Florida, and six nieces and nephews, all of whom live in Florida.

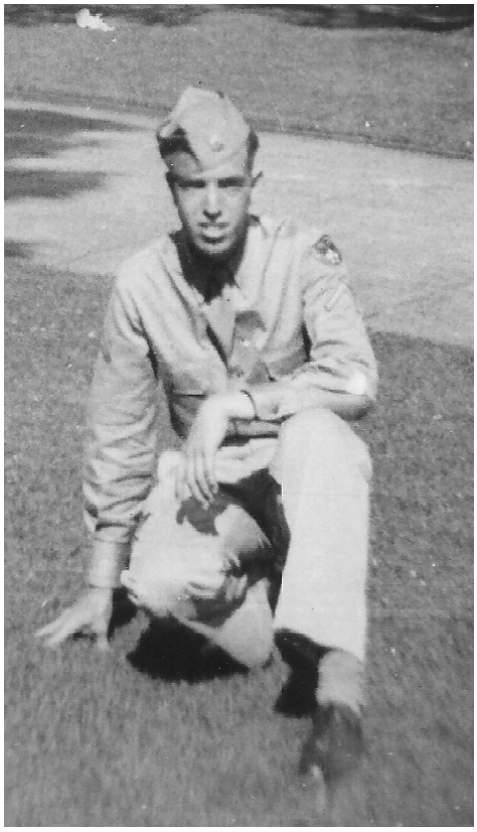
Betty asked that memorial gifts be made to Church of Our Savior in Cocoa Beach (5301 N Atlantic Ave, Cocoa Beach, FL 32931).

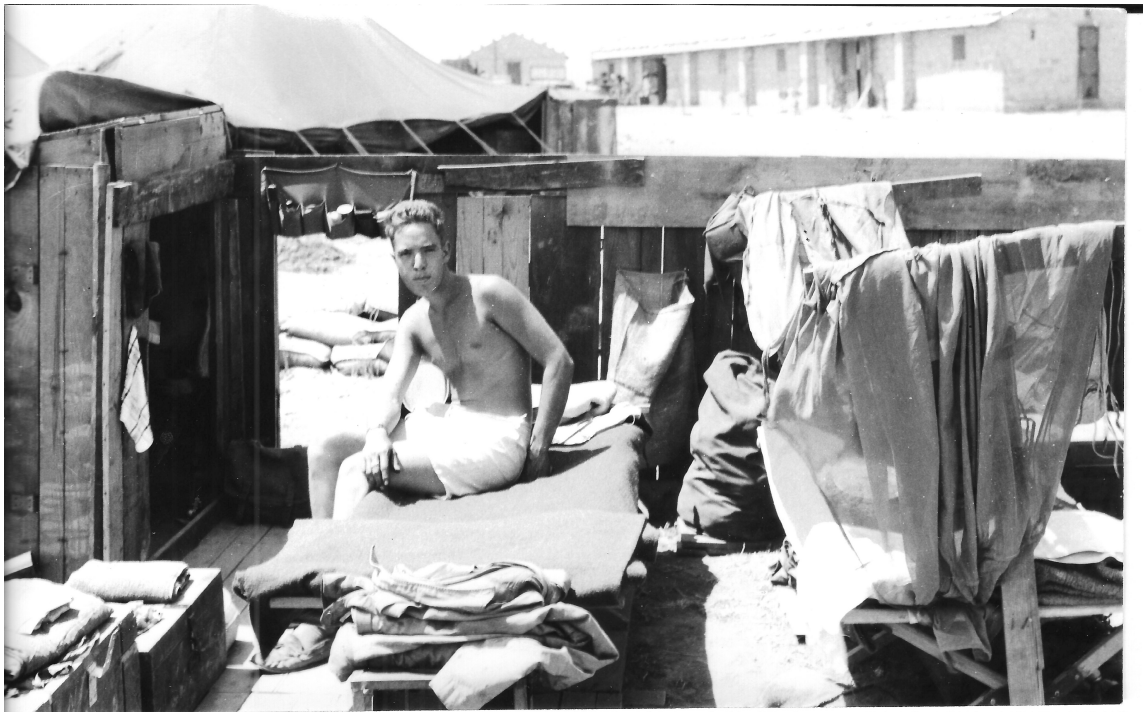
Karl died on November 26, 2017, at the age of 93. Karl has a sister, Barbara Davies, and two nieces living in Ohio.

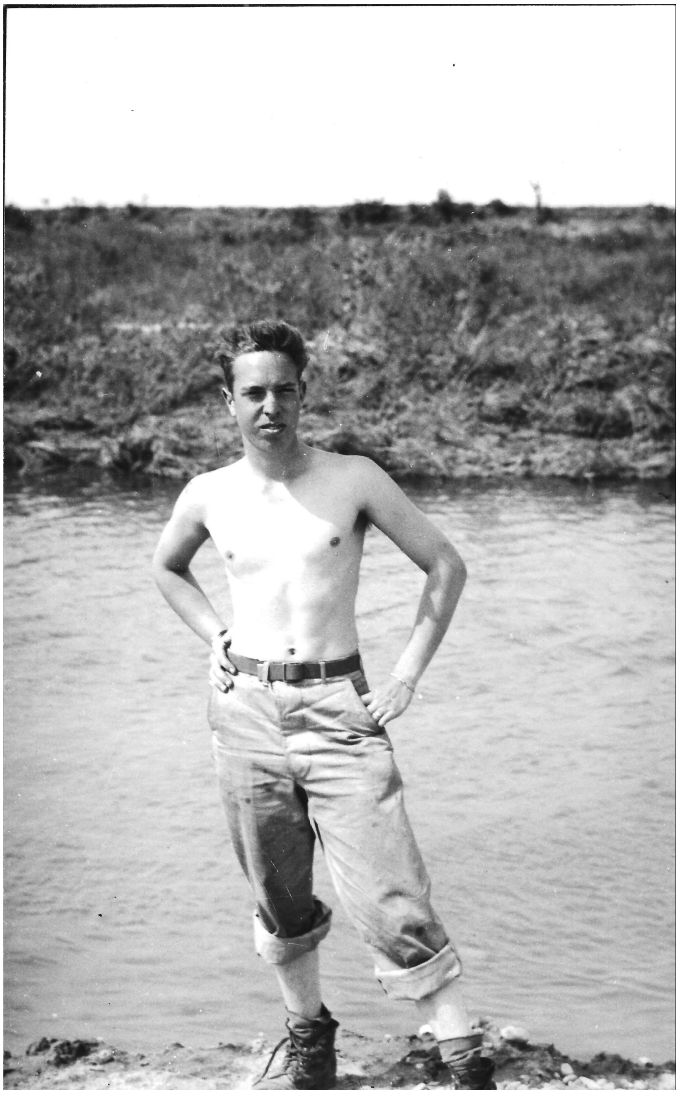
Betty suggested that memorial gifts for Karl be made to The Nature Conservancy (4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203-1606).

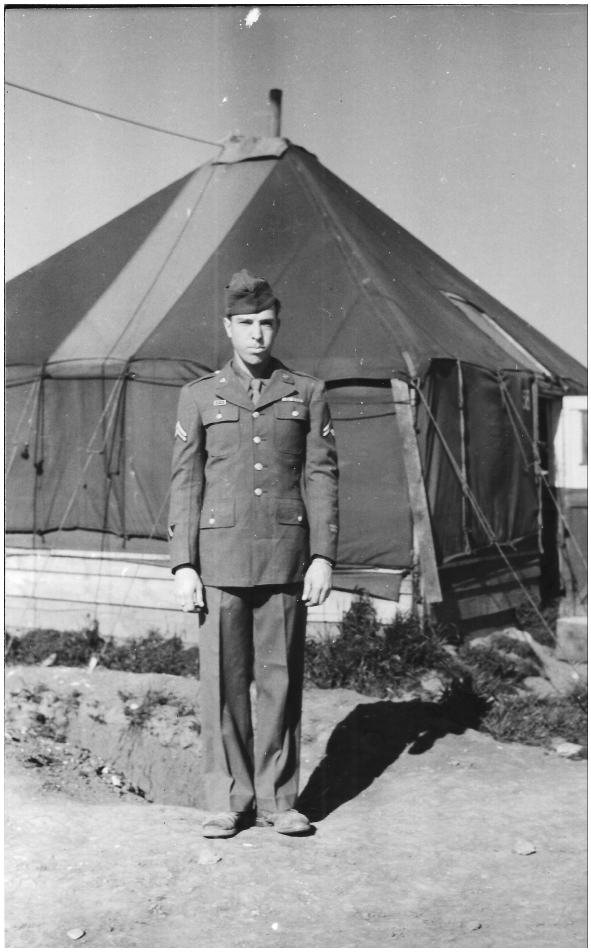
Betty and Karl's cremains were interned at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery.











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Camera Karl used in Italy

2017 - Karl talks with niece Sandra & Hugh about his ribbons and Italy photo lab and life
28 min audio on YouTube.
TinyURL.com/KFEaudio

2015 - Karl met fellow WW2 vet Sen Bob Dole on his Honor Flight to Wash DC

2011 - Karl and Betty at Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida. Karl showed us the nearby old Vinny Hotel where he did his basic training.